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THE

KING OF THE PEAK.

A Romance.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE CAVALIER," &c.

"The truth is, I have a plot for you." — *Cutter of Coleman Street.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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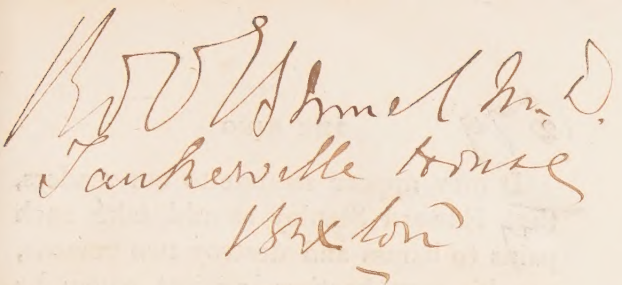

THE

KING OF THE PEAK.

CHAPTER I.

Here stand behind this bulk; straight will he come;
Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home;
Quick, quick; fear nothing; I'll be at thy elbow.

OTHELLO.

SOON after sunset Edward Stanley threw his mantle round him, and walked into the park, trusting that he should meet Ashby at the rendezvous; but he had not arrived, and the conspirator, proceeding in his walk, endeavoured to calm the whirl of his imagination, and thoroughly to digest his plans, for which he had had little time during the business and events of the day.

It may appear strange to our readers, that Edward Stanley should take such pains to harass and destroy two persons, one his own brother, against whom he had no cause of complaint; for which the rejection of his brutal love by Margaret Vernon, can scarcely be considered as an adequate motive. It has been said, and perhaps truly, that none but the devils sin gratuitously, an apophthegm of small compliment to the wicked of the human race. If, however, it be any apology for crime to have a motive for its commission, Stanley was not, or fancied he was not, without one. In common with the the younger sons of noble families, after receiving a good education, which fitted him for the most exalted sphere his abilities could attain, he was sent into the world, not, however, destitute of a provision, but with an allowance much smaller than that of his brothers, the elder of whom was supported as became the dignity of his birthright, whilst the second, Sir Thomas, was provided with the lieutenancy of the Isle of Man, a post which brought him a handsome salary.

He alone was without any stated income, and this omission arose probably from that knowledge of his reckless spirit which his father could not but possess, and which made him anxious, although the Earl had cherished him more nearly than any of his sons, to see his restless character smoothed down to its proper level by a collision with the world, rather than increase its arrogance by making him independent of it. But in this instance, Earl Derby deceived himself. The genius of his son, notwithstanding his inadequacy of means, raised him speedily above the rank of his equals, and acquired for him an influence and authority which were not calculated to diminish his pride; and when it sometimes, though rarely, happened that his designs were opposed by some spirit resembling his own in fierceness and love of superiority, the persevering fury with which he pursued the contest, and the implacable resolution which he evinced, never failed to conquer his adversary. It was said of him, as of Henry the Eighth, that he was always sure to ruin

himself or his antagonist. He neither spared blood nor reputation, but with the unhesitating throw of a gambler, perilled all upon every event of his career. Hence, in the German army, in which he had principally served, among the younger officers, who were men of as daring and undaunted character as ever marched into battle, there were few that dared to differ with him in opinion, and if any man, unless he was intoxicated, went so far as to cross blades with this redoubted champion, the principle that upheld him was rather an emotion of despair, arising out of unbearable insult or oppression, than that steady courage which goes to work with its eyes open. With that fiendish delight which loves to see men environed with dangers, Edward Stanley, for the jest's sake, led his companions into most extravagant peril; whilst those that were too prudent to put themselves into useless jeopardy, were hooted out of the camp as cowards and poltroons; and the success with which he executed many enterprises that were accounted too hazardous to be under-

taken by the oldest and bravest officers of the army, gave him a voice and authority with the soldiery which neither his years, his prudence, nor his length of service, were entitled to.

It was in the hope of supplanting his brother in the affections, and, consequently, in the fortune of Margaret Vernon, that induced Edward Stanley to turn his attention to that maiden, and not because he felt the passion of love for her more than for any other handsome woman that he had seen; but as he was wholly unacquainted with that tender delicacy, that unpresuming affection, which recommends itself to the female heart, it is probable, had the lady been without attachment, he would not have made any impression upon her. He could not constrain himself to the cold and tedious blockade by which the maidenly reserve of woman is overcome, but trusted to his military fortune to carry her by storm; and our readers have seen that his genius deserted him. Foiled in this attempt, he did not, however, despair of breaking those bonds of

love which subsisted between his brother and the object of his desires, and commenced his new experiment of exciting Sir Thomas's jealousy with fresh vigour, in the hope that it would so disgust his mistress, or alarm her pride, as to impel her on the sudden to dismiss him. This end attained, he fancied his brother's despair would produce some violent catastrophe; for although Sir Thomas Stanley was in general shrewd and penetrating, yet the distressful state of jealousy, his tormentor knew, could demolish the reason, and utterly overturn the best organized mind in the universe. Hence, he hoped that the knight's own sword would, according to the usage of the times, clear away one incumbrance upon his fortunes, and not only place him in the station of his brother, but open him a way to the possession of Margaret Vernon; and if even Sir Thomas should, with a more just philosophy, forbear to put an end to his own life, he trusted that his equanimity would so pique Margaret Vernon, that she, in revenge, would throw herself into his arms, an ultimatum

not uncommon in the history of female character.

Having walked until the twilight, Edward Stanley returned to the castle, and as he passed along the side of the moat to the gate-house, observed a man standing beneath the trees. Agreeable to the signal concerted with Ashby, he passed on, and, turning again, repassed the enthusiast, who immediately left his station, and came forward. He was clad in a forester's dress of green cloth, and seemed in every point a new man. Stanley could scarcely imagine that the figure before him, which was bold, free, and of handsome carriage, could be that of the fanatical dreamer, and hesitated as he accosted him: but the tones of his voice were not to be mistaken, much less the singularity of his manner.

"Now, Master Stanley," said he, in a low voice, "dost thou hold thy promise? I am as the pilgrim that has lifted his staff;—when I have seen Margaret Vernon, I will not halt until I be far away from the towers of Lathom."

"I fear you have tarried for me,"

answered Stanley, "but I walked in the park until the gloom set in. You must pass the portal with me — there is no other entrance, and speak not, as ye would avoid discovery. We must cross the first court to get upon the terrace — there you may conceal yourself behind the balustrade until the lady joins you."

"I will observe thy counsel," said Ashby.

"And forget not, I pray ye," continued the hypocrite, "to press upon this injured lady the bitterness of my remorse, the sincerity of my repentance, and my resolution to make atonement when Heaven shall bestow on me an opportunity. Bid her, out of her gentle nature, to bury my past conduct in oblivion; at least, let the good I will do hereafter, wipe out a proportionate spot of the crimes I have committed. Heaven knows, when I was betrayed into that foul act, I was not possessed of reason. Passion and furious transport had driven me mad. I was as a wild beast hungering after his prey."

"Thou wert indeed governed by the fiend," said Ashby, with solemn em-

phasis; "the tempter had laid his hand upon thee; he had blown the coals of thy hot youth, and the fire laid hold upon the victim. Pray to the Mighty One for deliverance. If thou art not prebanned, he will deliver thee."

"Follow me," cried Stanley, who could not hear the reproaches of his companion without silent indignation; "and conceal thy face from the porter; he will not question thee as thou art with me."

He then proceeded to the gate, followed by Ashby, and they both passed without difficulty, the porter observing that the first person was Edward Stanley, and supposing that his companion was some woodman he had met with in the park. They crossed the first court, which was illuminated by the glare of numerous lights within the castle, in profound silence, and passing through a vaulted archway, arrived in the lower and principal garden. Thence, by a high flight of steps, they ascended the terrace; but the traitor observing that two females stood at the further end, bade

Ashby farewell, and retreated. We need scarcely remark, that he flew on the wings of devilish malignity to the hall in search of his brother, whose jealousy he hoped to establish beyond doubt by this nefarious deception.

In the mean time, however, Margaret Vernon hastily approached the enthusiast; and after assuring herself that it was he, inquired who was the man that accompanied him thither?

"Was it not," she continued, "that false traitor, Edward Stanley?"

"It was Edward Stanley," replied Ashby; "but he is not now that abject wretch he was this morning: he is in deep contrition for the sin he wrought against you, and would have me to be his mediator. I told him I was about to meet you here; but he was too sadly stricken with the sense of his guilt to come into your presence."

"Ha! villain that he is," exclaimed Margaret Vernon, "he hath no sense of guilt or shame:—this is a new proof of his treachery. He would have lured thee hither, had not our meeting spared him

the task. Fly, Ashby, if thou would'st save my honour and thine own life; both are endangered by thy presence in this place. Fly! or thou wilt soon be environed; the fiend will have thee in his toils."

"I understand ye not, fair lady," replied Ashby; "but I would willingly do your bidding, if I knew how. The gate at which we entered is fast for the night, and without the countenance of some friend of the house, I cannot repass it."

"What is to be done?" exclaimed the maiden, with great emotion; "thou art but dead if thou stayest here. Ha! if thou could'st leap now like that ruffian."

"I will try for your sake, lady," answered Ashby; "my limbs are not so stark as they perchance seem."

"There is a part of the moat at the top of the garden," said Margaret, walking forward, "which I said this morning my horse might leap. If thou durst attempt this pass;—but thy failure would be fearful—"

"Tis nothing! nothing!" cried Ashby; "you have succoured me when in

distress, and the lion has now need of the mouse's aid. I will release ye or perish; lead me to the place."

With a beating heart and tremulous step, the maiden walked forward to a part of the garden-wall which overhung the moat. The crag upon which the wall was erected stood several yards above the ground on the opposite side; but, after jutting out at the top, shelved inward, and left a small platform, large enough, however, for Ashby, if he could descend the crag, to assist himself with a bound or two in leaping the ditch, which, although of considerable depth, was not here more than four yards broad. Without hesitation, the enthusiast climbed the wall, and, descending the crag with great caution, alighted safely upon the platform. Here he rested a moment, and then exerting an activity more befitting his present than his late appearance, he cleared the moat, and bidding the maiden farewell, was out of sight instantaneously. Margaret Vernon did not await the return of Edward Stanley, but, taking a sweep round the gardens by an unac-

customed path, to avoid the traitor, she and her attendant gained the castle by a private door.

She had scarcely quitted the terrace when Sir Thomas Stanley, with his naked sword in his hand, mounted the steps, and rushed furiously to the upper walks, leaving his treacherous brother concealed behind the outer side of the balustrade. In a few minutes he had pierced every avenue, and encircled the terrace, but he could perceive no trace of the assignation which his brother assured him was then being held, and he returned to the steps with much greater deliberation than he had left them.

"Thou art either deceived, Ned Stanley," said the knight, "or thou hast chosen to-night for fool's pastime. There is no living soul on the terrace."

"No living soul!" replied the conspirator; "no woodman! no woman!"

"There is neither man nor woman," answered the knight; "nor has man or woman been there to-night, unless the devil has lent them wings, and they have flown over the wall."

" 'Tis right marvellous!" exclaimed Edward Stanley, who saw the present time was not fitted to produce conviction on his brother; " I could have sworn I had seen a man in a forester's dress mount these steps, and meet two women in yon middle walk. The fiends must have been at revel, and have practised their spells upon me. But let us search the garden. If those I saw be of mortal flesh and blood, they will perchance have left some token of their presence: if they be of the goblin tribe, it will ease thy heart on the score of thy mistress."

He drew his sword, and mounting the steps, penetrated through every avenue and walk upon the terrace; but his search proved equally vain as that of his brother, and they descended into the lower garden, where they renewed their inquisition with great care but with as little effect. Edward Stanley was now puzzled how to account for the disappearance of Margaret Vernon and her companions; for he thought that, if they had discovered his approach with Sir Thomas, which was almost impossible, they could not

have withdrawn so quickly and so silently; and he had no idea that the penetrating eye of Margaret Vernon had watched him throughout the day, and had descried, in the various changes of his disposition, his ill-concealed restraint of his natural arrogance; his affectation of repentance; and the jealousy of his brother, which, she easily divined, had been aroused by her persecutor, the lurking serpent of treachery in his bosom. He concluded, therefore, that her fears of discovery,—the discovery of holding private conference with a stranger at that place and at that hour, had induced her to dismiss Ashby in haste, and that the enthusiast was still somewhere concealed in the garden. He knew that his purpose would be in some measure answered, if he could bring his brother to the sight of this man, clad in the habit he wore when he left him, as it would almost prove the story he had heard from Sir Simon Degge regarding the outlaw of Haddon, with whom Sir Thomas would not fail to identify the fanatic. Fraught with these ideas, Edward Stanley left no

alley, bower, or grove unsearched; but scrutinized every place in the hope of detecting the absconder. His industry, however, for a long time was not rewarded by any success, and he had nigh given up the task, when his brother, whose ears were keenly alive to the slightest sound, laid his hand upon him, and bade him be still.

"There is a footfall on the walk," he continued, "thou wert not cheated. The villain shall be slain, if my steel be true."

"Be not too hasty, but strike the blow sure," whispered the murtherous Edward; "if thy hand trembles, leave this deed to me."

"Nay, I will not slay him without giving him time for defence," replied the Knight, "I will peril my body 'gainst his. If he be the man of birth thou didst speak of, he should be treated as a noble enemy."

"Then I will encounter him for thee," said the daring traitor, "my hand is more sure than thine — thou may'st be slain."

"And if I be," returned the Knight, "let him go in peace; but thou, Ned, shalt run no risk of harm for me. Put up thy weapon."

"Nay, if he slay thee,"' cried his brother, "I will pink him full of as many holes with my rapier, as a pouncet-box — but he is here; now out upon him and drive home."

The Knight rushed from beneath the trees which overshadowed them, and striking the stranger fiercely upon the stomach with the flat of his sword, put himself in a posture of attack, and cried, "False villain! draw thy sword and keep thy life; for I will slay thee or thou shalt me within this hour."

The man doubled up, as if he had been beset with a raging cholic, and rising again, called out most lustily for mercy.

"Why, in the name of charity, do ye cut and strike me after this fashion? Is it seemly, Sir Thomas Stanley, to use your guest in this dishonourable way? Oh, marry, my thorax will have suffered deadly damage."

"Is it you, Sir Simon?" exclaimed Edward Stanley, in great amazement.

"Is it you, Sir Simon?" echoed the Derbyshire Knight, with a woeful grin. "Yea, it is me, Sir Simon, or what is left of me, after so dire an assault; but marry, why do ye set upon people i' the dark, without first asking their names?"

"I entreat your forgiveness, most worshipful Knight," said Sir Thomas Stanley, who could scarcely refrain from laughing at the ludicrous outcry of the sufferer, "but I took ye for another man."

"So ye say," replied the Knight, bitterly, "but I have not forgot the handsome carriage of Master Edward, and this is somewhat of a like colour — i'faith it is—"

"I intended no harm or insult unto you, Sir Simon Degge, upon my solemn faith," returned Sir Thomas, "but I would have slain a villain, who, I then fancied, did intend me injury. Once more I beg you to be satisfied."

"Why, marry, I suppose there is nought else to choose between being satisfied and fighting out my quarrel with

the bloody hand," cried the Derbyshire Knight, "but I say again, I have not been well used. First have I served as the butt of your japery, and now, forsooth, I run the risk of having my throat cut upon no provocation."

"The blow was not intended for you," returned Sir Thomas; "I thought thou hadst still been in the hall."

"In the hall!" exclaimed the Knight; "yes, and so were your honourable parents, and the Lady Margaret Vernon, who came from her chamber as ye quitted the room. We were in the hall indeed; but whither had your courtesy carried you, fair sirs? Into the garden, i'faith, to fight with shadows, or break your wit upon defenceless men. I came hither out of pure charity to your characters as gallant gentlemen, to bid ye in, if ye would save your credit."

"And we are right thankful to thy charity, Sir Simon," said Sir Thomas Stanley; "we will return with thee to the hall. If this cross chance be known, it will renew laughter at thy expence. Prythee, therefore, let it rest

in silence on thy part, and I promise ye it shall on ours."

"Nay, I were an ideot to blazon out mine own disgrace," replied the Derbyshire Knight; "but do not, I pray ye, sirs, hunt out any other apologies for keeping me silent; rather than be buffeted again, I will be bound in a penalty to keep my mouth shut all night."

"Thou shalt not need," returned Edward Stanley, laying his hand upon the Knight's shoulder, "keep silence only on this point, and on all others thou may'st use the tongue of a hureweible."*

"Nay, i'faith, my own tongue will serve," cried Sir Simon; "it hath never failed me this forty years, and in many a sturdy colloquy hath it borne me out, when others were dumb-stricken for lack of matter."

"But did'st thou see no one, as ye came into the garden?" said Edward Stanley.

"Nec unus, nec alter," replied the

* Hureweible, master of the women; an officer anciently appointed for the regulation of the women in the German camp.

Derbyshire cavalier, " the gate was closed; but i'faith, I met two damsels in the hall porch, and one of them chuckled mightily as I past; but ye would not slay a poor fellow for coming hither i'the night after his sweetheart. Marry, this is a foul breaking down of ancient customs, and will get ye little grace in the country."

Sir Thomas Stanley, as the probability flushed across his mind, that the person seen by his brother might be some woodman who had got into the garden for the purpose of visiting his sweetheart, turned pale at the thought that his blind rage might have slain an innocent man; and he looked at his brother with an air of significant displeasure.

" Heaven forbid," he said solemnly, " that I should act so ungraciously! If, as I trust, this man came with no worse intention, though he were a vassal, I would crave his pardon. Old customs, Sir Knight, bear too great a value in my regard to meet any disparagement; and if I shall hear that this matter is as thou

fanciest, I will bestow a hundred marks on the wench as a bride's gift."

"A hundred marks!" exclaimed Sir Simon; "i'faith thou art over bountiful; thou dost abuse the means thou enjoyest. If thou hadst said a dozen, or may be a score of marks, thou hadst done full liberally. Thou settest a bad example; i'faith thou dost."

"And I will add another hundred to the boot of my brother's!" said Edward Stanley, desirous of removing his brother's vexation, well knowing that no one would ever claim the reward; "for the man, if he be loyal, has run a near chance of his life this night, and well deserves such compensation."

"Two hundred marks!" cried the Knight; "why ye will advance him, if he be a churl, into a yeoman and landholder. I'faith ye beggar other gentlemen in the praise of the country, who have not means to keep pace with ye in bounty."

"Have not means!" said Edward Stanley, smiling. "What didst thou say but this evening about the money thou

hadst in thy pocket, though thy doublet was not sleeved with a difference?"

"Ay, true, that is for a man of my condition," replied Sir Simon, "I am, as ye know,

> ——————— procul negotiis,
> Ut prisca gens mortalium.

I have nought but what arises from my land, and that produces but little. Now the Earl your father is King of Man, and may levy what imposts it lists him. If I were in his regality, I would soon be the richest man in the country."

"And if ye were to press over hard upon the Manxmen," said Sir Thomas, "you would reap little good. To a generous lord they are gentle and complying; but to a hard and rigorous master, as turbulent and rebellious as the foaming sea. If you had once aroused their licentious spirit, it would be above your power to reduce it."

"Very like — keep me from such knaves," cried Sir Simon; "if they do not at all times, and in all circumstances, hold their lord in love, and awe, and

reverence, marry, they are false traitors. If a sovereign lays rather heavy burthens on his subjects, what is't to them? he has his occasions for the money — let them pay it, they have nought else to do with the matter. — But I am not quite fresh in't; my tenant of Bowdon had held the farm for fifteen years, and I raised his rent somewhat annually. Marry, Sirs, 'tis not well to let the common herd get rich upon the produce of your land; and so, i'faith, the churl told me he could not abide a further raising. 'Canst thou not?' said I; 'thou hast abode many an one, and thou must rise again, or hold no land of mine.' Well, sirs, will ye credit me when I tell ye, the sock-knave cut down my trees, turned up all my land, and wore the very heart on't out; suffered my hall-house, at Bowdon, to run to ruin; broke off my family achievements from the doors and windows; and, last of all, fled the country, and threw the estate upon my hands. This, i'faith, is what one meets with from your impudent villains."

"This is what every one who oppresses his tenantry deserves to meet with," cried Sir Thomas, indignantly; but come, sirs, we shall be again sought after; let us return to the hall — remember, Sir Simon, silence is our condition."

They now quitted the garden, and returned into the hall, where they found the Earl and Countess of Derby, with the Lady Margaret Vernon, in considerable wonder at their protracted absence. The maiden was at first fearful that Ashby had been discovered, but, as his name was not mentioned, her alarm gradually subsided.

CHAP. II.

And thus, Sir Policy, the crafty fox,
Foiled in a hungry and untented burst,
Angles about with sly insidious cunning,
And tries to snare the prey he cannot strike.
THE MAD DOCTOR OF DUNSTABLE.

As this plot had turned out so inauspiciously for the designs of Edward Stanley, who, nevertheless, supposed the untoward events which had happened to be the result of mere chance, and not to arise from the prudent conduct of Margaret Vernon, he resolved, that he might the more securely entangle the maiden in his snares, and lead her to look upon him without distrust, to see her without delay, to apologize for his past offences, and to endeavour to excite in her a feeling of pity for his passion, and of confidence in his integrity. About the same time, however, the maiden, who continued to watch him with great attention,

to note and sift all his actions, and to scrutinize every change of his countenance, aware, from the absence of his brother and himself on her arrival in the hall, that her suspicions were not futile, but that he had, in fact, led her lover to the very place of her meeting with Ashby, formed a determination not to be deceived by any protestations, which, from those words which Ashby had let fall regarding the change in him, it seemed probable he was about to make. She resolved to listen patiently to his hypocritical apologies; to appear softened by his repentance, and thus to make him believe his duplicity was successful, which would not fail to throw aside the mask he would otherwise constantly assume before her, and enable her the more easily to detect his treachery. She did not, however, intend to reveal aught of his misconduct to her lover, whose safety she prized too dearly to risk it even for the punishment of so base and treacherous, yet so fierce and warlike a ruffian, but contented herself with the hope of being able to repel his

schemes, and to destroy his plots against her happiness. Having taken this resolution, she did not attempt to avoid Edward Stanley, who anxiously sought an interview with her, but suffered him to accomplish his desire on the morning following the departure of Ashby. She was walking alone on the terrace, very near to the place where she had met the fanatic, and he, after looking carefully around, to see that there were no auditors, approached her with an air of affected hesitation. It was, indeed, with some difficulty that he pronounced her name, for she did not stop on his approach, and she assumed a look of stately reserve on condescending to listen to him.

"Fair Margaret!" said the deceitful traitor, with downcast eyes, "I know not—I would crave pardon—the crime I have wrought against ye—"

"Is, I should think, beyond hope of pardon," replied Margaret Vernon, indignantly.

"To a soldier of fortune," returned Stanley, with somewhat of his natural

boldness, dashed with an affected softness and emphasis of tone, " nought is beyond hope, not even thy love, for I hope to win it by the true service and loyalty I intend to shew ye."

The maiden was staggered with the depth of his finesse. If, she thought, he was the traitor she supposed him, he would not, with such impudent frankness, make an avowal which could serve only to put her on her guard; unless his powers of duplicity were not of that high order for which she had given him credit; and his passions, overpowering his vizard of repentance, by fits revealed the true condition of his heart. But she resolved to hear him more at large, before she formed her judgment of his character.

" By my soul, most excellent lady," continued Edward Stanley, with animation, " I do heartily repent me of the force I put upon ye yesterday; but think not, reckless as I am, that I would have done ye the hurt you dreaded. No, on my faith,—your rejection of my love raised a malicious devil in my heart,

which tempted me to affright ye; otherwise thou wert as safe with me as with thy noble father; and that this is sooth, so help me mine arm and strength in battle; nay, I will return with ye to Haddon, and unfold all that hath passed to the Knight; he knows my humour, and will assoil me of blame."

"My generous father is easily deceived," answered the maiden, sarcastically, "and so might I, by a man of thy cunning, if I were not assured by circumstance, plain and legible, that this thine excuse is an after-thought, a device risen up on the spur, and pressed into thine argument to serve as an apology; but if it were true, is it not base and unmanly for a noble and high-minded cavalier to practise his courage on the fears of an helpless woman? to glut his revenge, because she denied his love, with the sight of her tears and agonies—Oh! never let it be heard in the presence of men, or they will trample thee as the most pitiful coward that ever wore a weapon by his side when he had not the heart to use it."

"Nay, but hear me," exclaimed Stanley, almost choaked with rage and shame.

"Hear thee!" replied Margaret, whose high spirit had got the better of her discretion; "I tell thee the very bravoes of the camp will scorn thee, for attempting a deed which thou couldst not, durst not execute. Ha! traitor, dost thou start? Nay, look not around, though we were now in a desert I am thy match. Stir but one pace upon thy purpose, and I will drive this dagger into thy throat. Thou knowest, ere now, the blood of the Vernon."

She drew aside her silken jacket, and laid her right hand on the hilt of a small poniard which was hid in her breast.

"Henceforth," she continued more deliberately, "will I not live in one house with thee, save with the guard of this good friend."

"Nay, fair Margaret," said Stanley, whose heart was aroused by her lofty demeanour, "remove the dire steel from that lovely bosom, and I will swear to thee by all that is good and sacred——"

"Thou swear!" exclaimed the damsel, scornfully, "and what shall be surety for thine oath, thou who art an utter reprobate, an utter devil?"

"I will swear by thyself, if it please thee," returned Stanley; "by thee, the divinity I worship; by thy beauty, which is more dear to me than the sight of an enemy flying from the field is to the victors; by thy valour, which is surpassing; by thy wit, which is a miracle; by thy fair fame and spotless chastity."

"Ha! thou dost remind me that thou art even now, whilst thou art here fawning like the serpent that tempted Eve, plotting like that fiend to destroy my fame."

Margaret Vernon, whose spirit when once set upon its mettle (if we may use the comparison), was above restraint, and commonly ran away with the rider, was now so much heated with the treachery of her persecutor, that she forgot, in the hurry of this intemperate conversation, the rules of forbearance and discretion which she at first assigned herself. "Thou didst know of my meeting

with Ashby on the terrace," she continued, "which was but for the purpose of shielding thee from justice; thou didst come with him to the balustrade; I saw thee there, and well was it that my boding soul doubted of thy treachery; well was it for thee, shameless villain; for if thou hadst brought Thomas Stanley to the spot whilst Ashby remained, I would have exposed thee, though I had put mine own life in jeopardy."

"But Tom Stanley came not whilst ye were together," replied the deceiver with astonishing effrontery; "nor until long after. He would indeed have disturbed ye sooner, had not I withheld him."

"Thou!" exclaimed the maiden with indignant contempt.

"Ay, I," returned Stanley; "I did go to the balustrade. I left Ashby to go forward, and returned to the hall to prevent my brother from quitting it during your interview. Had I known of your meeting sooner, I would have opposed it, for it is my brother's wont to walk an hour by moonlight. When I got to the hall, he was calling

for his hat and cloak; he would have been upon you in a few moments."

Margaret Vernon smiled incredulously.

"Had it been my design to betray you to my brother," pursued Edward, "why did I not conceal him in the garden? I knew well your place of meeting."

"Because thou wert fearful he should know the truth," replied the damsel. "Thou durst not have placed him where he would have witnessed our meeting; for all that he would hear must be to thine eternal shame and ruin."

"And if I were so fearful of this disclosure," said Stanley, "why did I come into the garden with Thomas Stanley whilst there was a chance of discovery?"

"Nay, I know not thy reasons," returned the maiden; "they are masqued too deep for easy detection."

"Fair Margaret, thou art bent upon my condemnation, whether I be guilty or innocent —" said the conspirator; "it is the lot of those that have been once unfortunate to meet continual reprobation,

else wouldst thou not strain every motive that is in my favour to my prejudice and reproach. In rescuing Ashby from prison, to which his folly and arrogance subjected him, what purpose could I design more than to make amends to him for the pistol-dash I scared him withal?"

"Scared him! ay, as thou didst scare me!" answered Margaret Vernon, with a look of horror.

"The fire could not harm him," said Stanley, "for the pistol was not shotted."

"Then didst thou owe him no amends," returned the damsel, "for he was not daunted by thy savage fury."

"He was satisfied with my excuses," said Edward Stanley; "and sought not with unreasonable spleen to warp the truth to my disfavour; and sure it is not the part of a young and lovely maiden to be harder and more incredulous, less tender and merciful than man, whose difficulty of faith is sealed by commerce with the world. Have I wronged ye? heaven knows I am repentant. Have I soiled my honour? it

shall be burnished again in the clear fire of battle, where I will achieve deeds worthy of my fame and of thy smile."

"Wert thou as noble in character as thou art bold of heart," returned Margaret Vernon, "thou wouldst be a sea-mark for the valiant youth to sail by. Thy virtues would be above the silken rewards of love; they would deserve that thou shouldst be exalted on the tide of popular gratitude."

"And am I not exalted on the tide of popular fame, and envy, and admiration?" cried the fierce youth. "Is not my report blown over the military world? Who that has ever heard drum beat, knows not the name of Edward Stanley, if he has been on the side I fought, for hope and victory? as a foe, for the genius of carnage? Think ye I would barter this fearful but brilliant name for that of a sober and worthy gentleman, commonly brave and steadily honest? No, gentle Margaret, not for thy love, which is now uppermost in my thought, would I throw down the blood-stained plume I have

gathered in so many fields. It shall wave above my helmet till death has withered me."

"Thou dost not need to make a vow," said the damsel, sarcastically; "for me thou wilt never have to change thy humour. I should prefer a sober and worthy gentleman to the genius of carnage, though he were guilty of that unfashionable vice, steady honesty.—Oh! that a man, bred in a christian land, and of mild and honourable parents, should prize the horrible fame of the destroyer of his species! that he should choose rather to be termed the curse than the blessing of mankind! There is no apology for this blood-thirsty ambition; but if there were, it would be for those adventurous wretches, the outcasts of society, who are forced upon a military life for want of other employment. But what excuse hast thou, born of a noble house, enjoying the gifts of Providence, wanting in no good thing, for thy eager craving after the slaughter of thy kind? Is it not the property of fiends to wage eternal war against the

happiness of man, to feast upon his blood, upon his torments and slaughter? Yea, truly, of the fiends of darkness. And how dost thou differ from such fiends? In nought, save that thou art yet accountable for thy crimes, whilst they are suffering the pains of theirs."

"I have been a soldier under command, fair Margaret," replied Edward Stanley to the lecture of the maiden, "forced to execute the orders of my superiors."

"But what did force ye into service?" exclaimed Margaret.

"Honour!" answered Stanley. "Honour! which hath ever governed all valiant and generous spirits."

"Ha! it was false honour, a base offspring of a noble stock," said the damsel. "But granting the rise of thy career to be legitimate, hast thou never exceeded the orders of thy commander? Hast thou never overshot thy duty, and wreaked vengeance on the foe when thou shouldst have shewn mercy? Thou didst not gain thy blazon, the genius of carnage, by humanity."

"Humanity!" echoed Stanley, with a bursting laugh of pity for the maiden's ignorance; "out of the camp, fair Margaret, few can charge me with deeds of cruelty or violence; but whilst I am in harness, it is not only becoming me as a soldier to achieve the orders of my captain, but to surpass them, if I would rise above the vulgar herd; and when I can hear the voice of a foe crying for mercy through the storm of fire, and the roar of battle, and the wild clash of arms, or I can check the fierce dash of my war-horse, I could not strike him down for very contempt. Those that know me would never show me mercy; and if I have ever cut down a coward that has held out his hands to me, it has been when a thousand pikes have been levelled against my life. At Saint Quintin's the French thought I was the devil, and hunted me through the field as the March lords do border thieves with the sleuth-hound."

The maiden shuddered with horror as the sanguinary soldier told over his feats of bloodshed, and developed his unre-

lenting and impious character. To her fears of his duplicity and treacherous disposition, was now joined an insuperable aversion from his obduracy and profligacy of heart; and instead of obtaining by this interview his proposed end of winning the maiden's confidence, her dislike and distrust of Edward Stanley became more settled and irrevocable. Her spirit, however, high as it was naturally, was daunted and terrified by the picture of insensible hardihood which the soldier presented to her in his own person. Instead of his body being composed of mortal bone and flesh, from his indifference to the greatest dangers, his eager search after the most frightful adventures, it might have been formed of brass and iron. His soul seemed steeled and fortified against all evils, both in this world and the next, and he walked abroad in the might of his panoply, like Lucifer, fearing no accession of torment, nor hoping any addition of pleasure, unless it might arise from the torments of his fellow creatures. The dread with which Margaret Vernon was seized, served,

nevertheless, to put her on her guard, and to recall to her recollection those rules of action which she had laid down before this interview. She now more than ever feared the discovery of his flagitious conduct towards herself, certain that in any contest which should thereupon take place between the brothers, her lover must fall beneath the accustomed and unrelenting hand of his sanguinary kinsman. It was therefore with a greater appearance of complacency, though in reality with more dread and disgust than before, that Margaret Vernon listened to Edward Stanley during the remainder of their conversation, which on her part was broken, hesitating, and unconnected, whilst on his it was more bold, natural, and impertinent. "I will not let thee go, gentle Margaret," said he, "until thou hast accorded me thy pardon; so if thou art not in love with my company, grant it speedily."

"I will, I do grant it," returned Margaret, whose thoughts were fixed upon her lover; "I will not withhold it, provided —"

"Nay, no condition," interrupted Stanley, "let there be no clog upon thy fair forgiveness; let it be free and unlimited; and thou shalt see I will not use it the worse."

"But promise me, as thou art a soldier hopeful of renown?" said Margaret.

"Nay, I will not bind myself by such an oath," cried the soldier, whose libertinism was tinged with a shade of superstition, and who thought the damsel intended the prohibition of his love, "and if I did so trammel my soul, think ye that this bond could stifle my love for thee? that words, however strong and powerful, could root out thy beauty from my heart? Tut, they are mere words, and sooner than lose thee I would sport with them as the tide does with a feather."

"But thou wilt, for thine own sake, conceal thy fruitless desires," said Margaret Vernon; "thou wilt not openly profess thyself thy brother's rival? Nay, though I fear thee mightily, I will take courage to tell thee, that thou hast no more hope of winning favour in my heart than have the fiends of gaining Paradise;

and if thou art indeed the man of spirit thou dost profess thyself, I shall be no more troubled with thy courtship, which I hold in scorn and abhorrence."

"And I should hardly be the man of spirit I profess to be," said Edward Stanley, smiling, "if I gave up so fair a quest for the mere trick of a woman's vanity. No, sweet Margaret, I will hunt thee down, or be thrown out by a fleeter and stauncher hound. But he who wins thee, sweetheart, though it be Tom Stanley, shall gather his laurels upon the sod of my grave."

"Thou wilt not sure stand censor upon my suitors," said the damsel scornfully, "and point out the man thou wouldst have me choose for husband."

"No, I hate your censorships," replied Stanley; "but he who marries thee, save with my liking, shall have short lease of his life, if he will not stand scoff and scorn, and buffet like this ape of pedantry that came with ye to Lathom. If he be not as very a coward as ever suffered the contempt of his fellows without mark of revenge, he shall mate his bil-

boa with mine before your honeymoon be out. Be sure on't, Thomas Stanley is no bird of this feather; he is a right valiant gentleman, though little used in the knowledge of his weapons. The youth is sweet tempered, fair Margaret, and doth never give more offence than he would take himself."

"'Twere well, sir, if you observed his carriage," replied the maiden. "But now I would withdraw, if you are willing. My father expects you at Haddon, and if it please ye to return with us, you must make your preparation; for I shall ride to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Edward Stanley in astonishment. "Why, thou didst but come hither two days since; are you so soon wearied of Earl Derby's hospitality?"

"No, sir, not of your noble parents' hospitality," replied Margaret, "for they have entertained me with an affection and courtesy worthy their high rank and honour; but I am weary — thrice weary of your perversity; it has rendered the hours I might have passed in enjoyment

the longest and bitterest of my life. Until I saw these towers, ah, how happy was I! the stream of time flowed brightly and innocently along, dancing and sparkling with light and beauty — not a wave rippled too roughly beneath me, and my sails were filled with soft zephyrs, that breathed a refreshing sweetness upon the sunshine of my fortunes. Here, in thee, Edward Stanley, do I descry the first rock that has dared to threaten my bark. I behold thee as seamen do the water-fiend rising out of the waves, and denouncing shipwreck to my vessel. But though I fear thee now, a time may come when, bold as thou art, thy spirit will hide its head."

"Be that as it may," cried Stanley, smiling; "I never look into futurity, being no conjurer. But if thou wilt stay, gentle Margaret, thou shalt enjoy thyself without interruption. If my presence do affright thee, I will quit Lathom, and ride over to thy father. Thou wilt sure then be satisfied."

The maiden, at this proposal, which, if it did not cover some lurking induce-

ment, savoured of a bountifulness unbefitting so hardened a character, raised her eyes to the face of the libertine, and appeared struck with admiration that an offer of such delicate kindness should be made by him who had hitherto appeared utterly devoid of every virtuous feeling. She did not consider that a reckless and unlimited generosity was one of the characteristic traits of such fierce spirits as Edward Stanley's, and it was not impossible that it should branch out into a delicacy of feeling approximating to real virtue, although he might not observe, or might not understand its peculiar value.

"Thou art still doubtful of my faith, Margaret Vernon," said Stanley, who perceived the damsel continued to regard him without speakng; "thou dost not believe that I will keep my word; thou dost think that when thou shalt be enjoying the silent beauty of the woodland, or the soft hour of moonlight upon this terrace, the fiend, Ned Stanley, will break upon ye, and mar your ecstacies. But I swear by your own oath, as I am

a soldier, hopeful of renown, I will quit Lathom by sunrise to-morrow, and I will not again see thee until thou halt at Haddon gate."

"Well, sir, if you hold your promise," said Margaret Vernon, "I shall think there is still a hope of your better nature subduing those evil passions which now enthrall ye. I accept your offer freely; I would I had no cause to thank ye for it."

"Thank me not," replied Stanley, "for idle courtesy I hate of all things. Farewell, my love, for so thou art, and so thou shalt be — farewell."

Leaving her on the terrace, he walked hastily towards the stables, intending to order a horse to be prepared for his morning's journey; and found Sir Simon Degge busily engaged in examining his own hackney, which had become somewhat disordered by travelling at the rate he had ridden with Margaret Vernon and Sir Thomas Stanley from Derbyshire. The Knight did not observe the entrance of Edward Stanley into the stable, but having raised the hind leg of his

horse, surveyed it with great attention, and continued the while to lecture his groom upon the hurt it had received, and the means of removing it.

"Hobby," said he, "is hurt either in the stifle, which is a sore quarter, or in the hip, which is more difficult to come at for the seat of the damage. But I would have thee go into the grounds, and collect me some three or four hundred black snails; white will do, if thou canst not get black; but the black ones are best; and get some of the scullions to boil them for thee over a slow fire, till they are a jelly. Then —"

"What then?" cried Edward Stanley, clapping the Knight upon the shoulder; "dost thou apply gun-shot wound-salve for a strain of thy nag's leg?"

"Marry, I know not," answered Sir Simon, "whether boiled snails be used for gun-shot wounds or no; but my father was the best cattle-leech in the Peak; ay, and elsewhere, and he always applied them to a strain. My hobby, as you see, is a good horse; and though he be not one of your Barbary-bred things,

he can trot away some five or six miles an hour right pleasantly."

"A most noble beast!" exclaimed Edward Stanley.

"Nay, we were not more than two days," pursued the Knight, "in coming hither from Haddon."

"Right wonderful!" said Stanley. "But what think ye of steering for Haddon to-morrow? I am bound thither, and shall be glad, if thou art not tied to the Lady Margaret, to have thee for my consort."

"With good pleasure," replied Sir Simon; "for you see the hay harvest will be commencing, and it befits a master at that time to be near his people. But mind ye, Master Edward Stanley, we are not to ride off after the fashion the Lady Margaret and yourself exhibited yesterday in the park. Blessed be Saint Nicholas! this horse of mine has no will to run away after naughty exemplars. He is as steady and honest as old times."

"No, i'faith, thou shalt ride thine own

pace," returned Edward Stanley, "if it be a foot's pace, the whole journey."

"Nay, now thou art jesting, Master Stanley," cried Sir Simon; "I can move faster than a foot's pace if hobby be better of his hurt."

"And if he be not," said his companion, "thou mayest leave him behind with thy groom, and ride one of the Earl's hacknies. Thy knave may return with Margaret Vernon."

"Adso, so he might," said the Knight; "and the rest would be better for Hobby. But, I pray ye, what kind of beast have ye that I durst ride, for I would not lay a leg across the gaunt horse I rode yesterday, if you would give him me for the riding?"

"Never mind thy horse," said Edward Stanley; "I will speak a word to Ormston for thee, and thou shalt be fitted to thy liking: a good, stout, well-mouthed, bony, trotting nag."

"Nay, i'faith, none of your trotting nags for me," exclaimed Sir Simon; "I shall soon be trotted into the mire, if ye mount me on any such like creature."

"Well, then, a small lively ambler," said Stanley.

"Worse and worse," cried the Derbyshire Knight. "Ambler, quotha? What, a lady's tricksey galloper, that will bolt away with me in spite of my teeth! No, no; no ambler for me. I am come to years of discretion."

"Then what the devil kind of horse would ye have?" cried Edward Stanley, with great fury. "There's no dog-horse in the Earl's stables, save it be thine own."

"Dog-horse!" said the Knight, with a solemn squeeze of the lips. "Doth my hobby look like a dog-horse? Is he not in brave condition as horse need to be? He is not, I grant ye, pampered with corn, and other luxurious aliment, but he hath the best of hay in the country; good old hay, that would very soon give wind and strength to a dog-horse, Master Edward Stanley. Were I to feed my hobby as your high-bred beasts are provendered, the best rider among ye would not sit him in a fortnight."

"Ha, ha!" cried Stanley, laughing

heartily; "the best rider or the worst in this house would be full loath to ride a beast of burthen."

"Burthen!" cried Sir Simon; "I draw him, to be sure, now and then, but in a light tumbrel. However, thou shalt see when we are out. I would he had a better horseman to mount him; he would put your ambler to his mettle, I'll be his warrant."

After giving his directions for the preparation of his steed, Edward Stanley retired with Sir Simon to the castle, where he informed his father and the rest of the company of his intended journey. Sir Simon also excused himself from a longer stay on the score of his farming duties; and as the Earl had been a witness of some of the follies of which the Knight had been guilty, he was not sorry for his departure.

CHAP. III.

Come, spur away,
I have no patience for a longer stay.

RANDOLPH

EARLY the following morning Edward Stanley and Sir Simon quitted Lathom, the towers of which, painted with the virgin gold of the newly-risen sun, seemed like one of those splendid palaces described in the romances of the East. The Knight, whose timidity would not be accommodated with any of Lord Derby's horses, rode his own hobby, which, by good fortune, or the application of the testudinary decoction, was relieved from his lameness; but notwithstanding the vaunt which Sir Simon had made of his mettle, the first half-hour's march proved that he had little chance of keeping common paces with the fleet horses of Edward Stanley, and the groom that

attended him. His own retainer was, if possible, worse mounted than himself; for his horse was not only out of condition, if he ever had been in, but knuckled fearfully in every joint, beside having broken knees. He had, moreover, been evidently used for draught, the shoulders and back being nigh bare of hair from the galling of the harness. The appearance of this animal, and of the servant who rode him, was as fine a contrast to that of Edward Stanley's groom and horse, as Sir Simon and his steed were to the young soldier and his high-bred courser. Edward Stanley was clothed in a rich suit of crimson velvet, sleeved with tawny, and embroidered over with Lucchese gold, buff boots, and a hat of black beaver, ornamented with a plume of feathers. The caparison of his horse was very slight, but uncommonly neat and elegant. On the other hand, Sir Simon Degge was habited in a doublet of buff leather, similar to the gypons worn by the knights beneath their armour, with trunk hose, mantle, and hood, after the old fashion; and his hobby was hid be-

neath a load of ancient harness, tawdry, tarnished, and of a fashion long laid aside by persons of a better rank. The servant of the Knight wore a gabardine or coarse frock, somewhat similar to those now used by the fraternity of carters; and, instead of the proper equipments for his horse, made use of a pack-saddle, to which was affixed a pair of rude stirrups, and a bridle that had done service for at least a century. Edward Stanley's retainer, on the contrary, was finely busked in a modern suit of blue cloth, laced with silver, and bearing the Stanley arms embroidered on his sleeve. His horse was housed as befitted the rank, rather than the means, of his master, and would not have been unworthy to attend in the suit of any nobleman of England. Thus mounted and equipped, they proceeded on their journey; and during the first few hours' ride, whilst Stanley restrained his horse to the pace of the Knight's hobby, with great enjoyment and comfort on the part of Sir Simon. Edward Stanley, whose impatient spirit continually urged him forward, endea-

voured to beguile the tediousness of their progress in conversation with his companion.

"Thou hast seen the Lady Dorothy Vernon lately," said he to the Knight; "think ye she is as fair as her sister?"

"Yea, she is *pulcherrima, dea venustatis,* "cried the knight. "I had not laid mine eyes upon Margaret Vernon; but I thought fair Dorothy was pre-engaged."

"What! to this knight-errant,—this outlaw!" said Stanley.

"'Tis so believed by many, though her father knows not that they have actually met," answered the Knight. "He keeps a severe eye upon her nevertheless."

"Is she as tall as Margaret Vernon?" said Stanley.

"No; nor so fat," replied Sir Simon; "nor has she such sharp eyes, nor such a devil's tongue in her head. Marry, whoever hath that wench, I warrant she'll keep his house warm."

"But Dorothy Vernon hath fair hair, fair eyes and complexion," said Stanley.

"Complexion!" exclaimed the Knight;

"the lily and rose are mingled in her cheek, and African ivory is not so white as her neck. Then she is mild-tempered, mild as a dove; that is what I like her for, Master Stanley. She hath never a cross word in her mouth; all as sweet as honey: no flights of sarcasm, like her sister; no saying of one thing when she means another, but abiding by her word in all things; no grinning and laughing to put you out of countenance, but encouraging all by her respect and attention. She seldom smiles; but when she does, i'faith, it is like the innocent smile of a rosy cherub, like that of a sweet infant which is yet suckled at the mother's breast."

"I fear she is melancholy," said Edward Stanley; "by thy account she is either so, or far gone in love. Thou didst never make an attempt upon her?"

"An attempt!" said the Knight with considerable surprise.

"Thou didst never propose thyself to her as thou hast done here to Margaret, in way of marriage?" cried the soldier.

"No, i'faith," replied Sir Simon; "I

was vastly awed by her sweet carriage: it repels one's familiarity as much as the frank humour of Margaret doth invite it. Beside, I tell ye, she is bound to this outlaw; and what use is there in hankering after the prize that another hath won?"

"The prize is not won until she becomes another's wife," said Stanley; "and if she be worth the pains, thou shalt see I will reclaim her from sorting with this wild mate. Beside, I must see this gay spark. By his bearing he should have some mettle."

"That is as he pleases," said Sir Simon. "They say he is like a ghost, for he appears where he is least expected; and is not to be found where 'twas most likely he would abide."

"Ye may oft spy him o'the edge o' dark upon Wye bank," said Sir Simon's retainer; who, leaning over his horse's head, had listened with great attention to the conversation of his superiors.

"Hollo, knave," cried Edward Stanley, "who bade thee open thy mouth? Thou art but ill bred to mingle in gentlemen's converse."

"I pray ye pardon him," said the knight; "Septimus is an honest lad, though somewhat given to familiarity with his betters. But it is my fault. I was always over-kind to my knaves, Master Stanley, and they take liberties upon my benevolence; but it must be amended. Septimus, draw back, and keep at greater distance. We would be private."

"Nay, I want t'know nowt o'yer talk, not I," said the fellow, drawing his horse in. "If it does na touch upo' me, belike I ha' nowt t'do wi' it."

"Thou hast seen this man then on the bank of the Wye," said Edward Stanley, desirous of learning as many particulars of the outlaw as he could gather.

"Yea, I han," answered the servant; "but I ha' nowt t'do wi' it."

"What kind of man was he?" said Stanley.

"I canna justly say," replied the fellow; "I ha' nowt t'do wi' it."

"Thou shalt have somewhat to do with the flat of my dagger, rascal," cried the young soldier, enraged at his per-

versity, "if thou do not answer more civilly."

"Nay, strike him not," exclaimed the Knight; "for if once thou lay thy weapon upon him, he will not utter a sentence though ye were to flay him alive. Septimus, my man, thou hast seen the outlaw; what kind of look hath he? Is he a thin, lathy, shrimpish-made fellow, somewhat like Master Stanley here; or, is he a tall, handsome, personable-looking man — aught like myself, for example?"

Edward Stanley could not forbear to laugh with great animation at this complimentary inquiry; but the man, without moving a muscle of his stolid face, replied, in a muttering tone, "Nay, I canna say that he's like th' Master Stanley, for he's a bit longer i' th' body, and more aged to look upon: and he's not much liker your worship; he's better looking for what I know, fuller i' th' face, and a powerful sight wider across th' shoulders; he's a better-carried mon a'together."

"Didst ever speak to him?" said Stanley.

"Yea, I ha' bid him good night when I've cross'd him i' th' woods," answered the servant; "but I canna say I know his face o'er well. Ye see, when I've caught sight on him, it's been i' the dusk of nightfa'. He's enow of strength and sinew, I wot; for folk say a mon canna be found that'll bend his bow. He doles out th' deer at a merry rate: they mighten be's own. There comes na a week that he does na fell some two or three o' th' Vernon's best—"

"Ay, marry," cried the Knight, "without saying with your leave, or by your leave; and his impudence drives Sir George into the most bitter fits of passion that ever man was harassed withal. Then he curses his keepers for a pack of loitering cowards, that cannot take a single man."

"Why, you see, he never shows himsel to more than three or four at once," said Septimus; "and he does na care a raddle for em. He goes belted wi' sword and dagger; so that its a fou' life to lay hand on him."

"Looks he like a soldier?" said Stanley.

"Why I canna say but he does," replied the man; "that is, when he's i'the cue. By times he wears a fine hat and feathers, and boots, like your worship; and other times he has a plain hood and hose, like his worship Sir Simon. But Gilbert Onshaw, o' the Wood-head, knows more of him than other folk. Gilbert's been a poacher, a cock o' th' same brood, and could right soon find him out, an he liked the job."

"Then why does not Sir George force him to give the outlaw up to justice?" said Edward Stanley.

"Nay, the country wots o' the outlaw's resort to Gilbert's," replied Septimus, "but they canna swear it; and Gilbert's no poacher now. The Vernon canna lay hand upo' him wi'out clean wrong. Ye see Onshaw's getten a wench; a daughter, like. They callen her Rose; and folk say, that her bonny face hath drawn th' outlaw to her father's cottage."

"But is it not said that he wooes the Lady Dorothy?" said Stanley.

"Ay, marry, there's the mystery," said the knight; "and I have heard Sir George say, that 'twas much more likely a banished man should court a woodman's daughter, than the child of a man of rank and fortune."

The servant shook his head with a knowing expression, and said, "The King o' th' Peak may be bitten. An I had owt to say in't, I should na marvel if the outlaw went to Onshaw's that he might put away people's talk from the Lady Dorothy; but he may court the one for his love, ye know, and t'other for his leman. Rose is a dainty wench. Ifackins, there's one lad ma'es rout enow about her. I trow he would fain slay yon outlaw, an he durst."

"Thou meanest the woodman, Walter Needham, of Edensor?" said Sir Simon.

"Yea, he had followed Rose some three or four years," answered Septimus; "and they were t' ha' been married. That was afore this fine fellow was seen either about Haddon or Chatsworth;

but, soon after, Rose looked askew on Wat, and would ha' him keep distance. Ye may think he was red mad; but he couldna help himsel. Folk say Gilbert hasna poached sin; but he's getten a mint o' gowd in his poke."

"I'faith, a fine honey-fall for a rough woodman like Ollerenshaw!" said Sir Simon. "Observe, Master Edward Stanley, Septimus calls the woodman Onshaw, after the barbarous dialect of the Peak; but his name is Ollerenshaw, a common and ancient appellation in that country."

"Very like," returned Stanley, carelessly; and then, addressing himself to the servant, continued, "thou didst never see this outlaw use his weapons."

"One of his weapons I han," replied the servant, "his long bow, and I never saw better shot. Beside, folk say he's the best man at quarter-staff i' th' Peak; at last Edensor wakes a stranger belted a' the fighters, and carried off the prize; and some man that was there said he knew it was the outlaw."

"He would have made a notable

champion at the Olympic Games," said the Derbyshire knight; "the record of his fame would have perchance employed the pen of some genius *Pindarico ore*."

About that hour which we of modern times employ in breakfast, Stanley and his companions reached the town of Manchester, distant about the middle way between Latham and Haddon, where they stopped at a house of entertainment. Here the knight of Derbyshire fully expected they were to remain until the morrow, for the purpose of rest and renovation of vigour to themselves and their horses; but he was disagreeably undeceived by the active soldier, who told him he had given orders that their horses should be again brought out after a few hours' refreshment, and that they should proceed in their journey.

"What, Sir!" exclaimed Sir Simon, "would ye ride seventy miles in one day?"

"Ay, a hundred and seventy, if my horse would carry me through," replied Stanley: "why not?"

"Marry, Sir, we shall be spoiled, horse

and man," returned the Knight. "It is true we have journeyed upon level ground and a fair road hitherto; but have we not ridden with wonderful alacrity?"

"Alacrity!" cried Stanley, "we might have been at a marshalled funeral; we left Lathom by three of the clock, and now 'tis ten. How reckon ye that? Seven hours for some five and thirty miles."

"Ay, right, and very good speed, i'faith. Beside my hobby was lame. I durst not ride him over fast."

"But he is now mended," said the soldier; "his hurt, as I told thee, was but a strain, and it is vanished with the exercise. He will be all the better for his march, man."

"Marry, I shall be right glad if he confirm your leechcraft," said the Knight; "but seventy miles is a sore distance to travel; and the road we have yet to pass is as rough and mountainous as any in the Peak.".

"So much the better," replied Edward Stanley; "we have ridden far enough in a flat country, where we could

not see an arrow-flight for the woods that hemmed in the road. When we get on Derby Hills we shall at least have a long view and pure sky ; two things of excellent quality, Sir Simon, to a man used to the swamps and fens of the low countries. But come, Sir Knight, as meat is to be had here for money, let us make the best use of our time. I know not whether thou be'st of a hungry nature, but, by St. Bride, exercise doth ever famish me."

"I am not destitute of appetite," answered Sir Simon ; "but it is necessary to eat but sparingly when ye journey a horseback, for lack of exercise to cause digestion. Moreover, your taverners and hostellers are mere fiends in their charges for entertainment. The best of them lack conscience as much as your Jew or Mahommedan. Now, to save charge, when I travel alone, how think ye I manage?"

"Nay, I know not," answered Stanley, carelessly ; "thou art original in all things."

"I carry some half dozen eggs in my

wallet, hard boiled and cold," said Sir Simon: "they relish surprisingly with a spice of bread and cheese, and a raw onion; and then it makes one chuckle to think how one has cozened the taverner."

"Who curses you for a poor skinny-hearted miser, that will sooner want than part with a Dutch stiver," said Stanley. "By my faith, I would rather dash my purse, heavy laden, in the face of a greedy devil, than abide the sly grin of his contempt."

"Tut, thou art young," exclaimed the Knight, piqued at the frank disapprobation of his thriftiness expressed by his companion; "a few years will make thee wiser: thou knowest not the value of money."

"Do I not?" returned the impetuous soldier, with fierce disdain; "I know what money will buy and sell. It has bought me love, wine, pleasures, and delight. I have sold my blood for money; and yet, when I had it, I reckoned this guerdon of my life as dross — as dirt and ashes. While I had it, my comrades were as welcome to its use as myself; they

revelled in its produce. I never held it as mine own, to be griped and hoarded up as if my happiness could have been secured by placing it under locks and bars. But what knowest thou of money's worth? thou that hast not the soul to throw away a chance mark in a year?"

"Throw away, forsooth!" cried the Knight; "marry, these are not times to throw away money. It behoves every honest man to be careful of his means, that he may pay others their due, and keep the wolf from his door. Is it seemly, think ye, for men of years and discretion to be spending their substance on rich suits, and trinkets, and trappings, or in dicing and gambling, as some of your high-bred gallants do? No, marry; when I take a dice-box in my hand, I pray it may burn my fingers.

"And when thou dost wear a modern suit," said Stanley, "it will burn thy back also. A habit of plain cloth would make thee look grave for a month; velvet throw thee into a fever; and satin and embroidery set thee dancing mad to the end of thy days. I'll be sworn thy

suit of pink velvet was thy father's, the knight of the pantry.

"Ha, ha!" replied Sir Simon, with a smirk, "thou art an arch lad. It was, in sooth; but I sent it to a tailor, when I was in London, and he made some change in the fashion on't."

"Thou didst not employ a court tailor for thy bravery?" said Stanley.

"Nay, he was recommended to me by my landlord in Gracechurch-street," said the Knight, "who swore by his conscience that he always employed him, and that the man showed a pretty taste. His taste was well enough, for aught I know; but he cabbaged three yards of the velvet, which was double-piled, and charged me natheless two pound for the mutations he made i'the suit."

"But that included trimmings and embroidery," said his companion; "and, to tell truth, thine habit is seamed after a novel fashion: and novelty costs money, by my faith."

"Yea, with this philosophy I reconciled myself to the overcharge," answered Sir Simon; "for I was well pleased

with the device and cut of the embroidery. It is not what is seen every day, truly, nor on every body's back."

"No, indeed," said Stanley, smiling; "it should afford thee consolation that thou art singular in thine habit. It is that which our prime gallants ever seek in their display; and sooner than bear competition in dress with the common rabble of your city 'prentices, they would barter lace and embroidery, plumes and rich stuffs, for sheep-skins and fig-leaves."

"Sheep-skins, indeed, would be an economical habiliment," said the Derbyshire knight; "and would be no bad relief to the overburthened states of your unthrifty courtiers. Marry, what with fumers and tailors, mercers and embroiderers, jewellers and feather-makers, a man that gives in to the gaudiness of fashion is shortly worried out of his means. Now, I fancy, thou dost spend some thirty or forty rials by the year on these ensigns of foppery."

"Not I, by my faith," cried the soldier; "I never lay out a half-angel from January to December."

"Pray, then, how dost thou provide thyself such gay doublets as this thou wearest?" said the knight. "In my judgment, its cost would not be much short of twenty nobles."

"I will tell thee my way," said Edward Stanley, "on condition thou wilt stand the charge of our entertainment."

"Nay, marry, that would be to buy knowledge over-dearly," replied the Knight.

"Thou wilt buy it cheaper than I did," returned his companion: "but please thyself; I am not anxious thou shouldst learn this secret."

"But dost thou indeed get such brave habits without money?" said Sir Simon, gravely; "art thou serious?"

"Ay, by my faith, thou seest I have such," answered Stanley; "and if they were to arise only from my means, I should lack them long enough. Earl Derby allows me but two hundred pounds annually by the tale, and my clothes are worth twice the money."

"What, four hundred pounds by the tale, yearly!" exclaimed Sir Simon, with

astonishing admiration; "dost thou say four hundred pounds?"

"Ay, four hundred pounds," replied Stanley.

"And thou wilt swear thou dost pay nought for them?" said the Knight.

"Yes, I will swear with a good will," answered the youth.

"But thy father does," said the Knight.

"Not he, i'faith; he knows not I deal so largely."

"Well, then, marry, I cannot lose much to learn so rare a secret," cried the Knight; "thou shalt have thy demand: I will pay for our entertainment."

"Horse and man," cried Stanley.

"Nay, but for ourselves," replied Sir Simon.

"Then thou shalt not know," returned Edward Stanley; "and unless thou wilt discharge every item of our expenses on the road, I will hold this secret within mine own breast."

"Ha, i'faith, thou art a keen chapman," cried the Knight, shaking his

head; "thou hast been on the hills before to-day. But I will not haggle with thee for a rial; so have it as it lists ye — I will pay all."

"Thou dost right well, and art a brave fellow," cried the Soldier, shaking him fiercely by the hand; "and I will learn thee to play the gallant in prime fashion, with all my soul. Nicholas Furnivall, by Paul's church, the great court tailor, is retained by Earl Derby for all his household, and by my faith has not another such fat customer upon his books. I go to Nick when I want clothes, and say, 'Nick, I want three or four suits; but the devil a rial have I to pay withal.' 'Ah, Master Stanley,' he replies, with a gentle shake of the head, 'you are down some twelve hundred pounds in my ledger, without a cross on the credit side; but never mind, my brave lad, I have made money by your house, and I will not turn you back for a hundred pounds: pay me when you can.' Nick's a good fellow, Sir Knight; but think ye he gives me credit for love of our house? No; he would see every limb of it in a

blaze with sober indifference, if the loss did not touch his pocket."

"Ay, but—"

"But he thinks the Earl will die, or I shall make my fortune by war or marriage," cried the Soldier; "and fears withal that if he were to refuse my necessities, I should resent his want of charity."

"Ay, but," said the Knight, "I see not how thy getting clothes on credit can teach me to procure them without money. I could get clothes on credit too; but if I were not to pay when the credit expired, the tailor would soon be at me with John Doe and Richard Roe."

"Ha! there, to be sure, I have the start of thee," cried Stanley; "for I have nought upon which he might levy execution, save my steel weapons, and those would chance to prove too hot for his fingers."

"Why, then, I fancy thou hast bitten me with thy fine secret!" cried the Knight, with a very simple countenance; "thou hast ~~been~~ been at thy quips and

cranks with thy clothes got without money."

"Nay, thou art unjust to accuse me of bad faith," said Edward Stanley, gravely. "If thou art too rich to avail thyself of this secret now, thou hast but to give away thy possessions, and thou mayst enter upon the full enjoyment of it. I will gladly exchange my lack-land condition for thine, and then there will be no bar to thy living upon credit. Moreover, if thy fortune should take a turn, and pitch thee down stairs, the knowledge thou hast now bought so cheaply will stand thee in good stead."

"Marry, sir, I will take care that fortune never does pitch me down stairs," replied the Derbyshire chevalier; "it would be lending her a hand to live after thy fashion. But pray what use dost thou make of thy two hundred pounds, that Earl Derby allows thee?"

"Faith, Knight, I know not, as I never keep reckoning," replied Stanley; "but if thou wilt take the trouble to watch me pretty narrowly, thou mayst guess somewhat near the mark. My

pocket is but a reservoir, and the money that fills it is very shortly dispersed abroad; now thine is like the ocean, which swallows up, in its unfathomable depths, all the rivers that flow into it, and retains them for ever."

"Thy simile would have been more true if not so striking," said the Knight, "hadst thou compared my pocket to a draw-well, which hath never contained much water, but is now exhausted with continual draught. I know not if I have so much money about my person as will pay the charge of our refreshment."

"I will lend thee at the price I have borrowed from Eydrach Boggerman, the Jew of Prague," said his companion, "fifty per cent."

"Fifty devils!" exclaimed Sir Simon, with great indignation. "One need not marvel how your money goes, if you give one half for the loan of the other. Body o' me! fifty per cent! We ought to thank Heaven on our knees, ten times a day, that we have no Jews in England."

"Tush, man! we have knaves as bad,"

cried Stanley. "Part of the debt I owe Nick Furnivall is for money lent, charging one hundred rials for fifty paid down. If a man wants money, he must buy it as he can; it is like other goods i'the market."

"Didst thou hire much money after this enormous rate?" said Sir Simon.

"Some two or three hundred pound," replied Edward Stanley.

"Now, if thou wilt agree to remit me the charge of the entertainment, as I did undertake to *pay* for it," said the Knight, "I will put thee in a way not only to reimburse the usurer, but to pocket some six score pound thyself."

"Ha, thou dost talk!" answered Stanley; "but I would fain learn thy wise scheme: it will be somewhat remarkable, I'll be sworn — out with it."

"Nay, not before thou dost remit the charge," said Sir Simon.

"Well, 'tis done. I know thy blundering sconce can produce nought feasible, though thou talkest so big; but it will be worth the money, if it be but to laugh at thee."

"Nay, I warrant thee, 'tis no laughing matter for Master Nicholas Furnivall. Thou knowest that His Highness King Harry, the present Queen's father, passed a statute against usury, enacting, that he who took above ten pounds in the hundred for his money should forfeit treble the value, and be subject to imprisonment and ransom. Now do thou sue him upon the statute, and thou wilt assuredly recover more money from Nickie than thou dost owe him on the borrowing account."

"The devil seize thee," cried Stanley, in an outrageous passion, "for a despicable and sordid slave! Wouldst thou have a Stanley, a man of the noblest blood in England, become informer? Wouldst thou have a soldier, of a race that has pulled down and set up kings, turn common prover, and sharer of spoil got by the law?"

"Nay, Master Edward Stanley — nay, now, good gentleman, sweet Master Stanley, fair sir!"—exclaimed the timorous Knight, following around the room the fierce Soldier, who often grasped his

dagger, and seemed determined to revenge that which he deemed an insult in the blood of the offender — "be not enraged, I beseech ye; I meant ye no injury — by my faith, I did not."

"The vilest usurer that ever fattened upon the distresses of his kind is better than thou," said Stanley, when he grew somewhat cooler; "for thou wouldst not only take the gain they do if thou couldst get it, but thou wouldst also lead them into the wrong, to cheat them of their money."

"Nay, now, thou dost judge too hardly. I would not accept more than the law allows; and, as justice of the peace, I would see those punished who offend against the law. Come, be pacified; and I promise ye I will still pay for the entertainment. There, now, thou canst not refuse."

But some time elapsed before the brow of the Soldier recovered its usual placidity; and he ate his meal in sullen silence, without noticing the repeated attempts of his companion to soften his displeasure.

CHAP. IV.

While thus they pass, the sun his glory shrouds,
The changing skies hang out their sable clouds;
A sound in air presag'd approaching rain,
And beasts to covert scud across the plain.
Warn'd by these signs, the wandering pair retreat
To seek for shelter. PARNEL.

ABOUT noontide, Edward Stanley, whose anger was not yet abated, called for the landlord of the house, and, throwing down the reckoning, ordered his own horses; whilst Sir Simon Degge, whose fear, instead of subsiding, seemed to be increased according to the duration of his companion's ill humour, followed him into the court, and gave order for his beasts also. The active Soldier, taking no no notice of the Knight, threw himself into the saddle; and, putting spurs to his mettlesome courser, rode at a sharp pace out of the yard, followed by his servant, and, at a greater distance,

by Sir Simon and his humble retainer, who were constrained to use rod and spur with great vigour to keep their better-mounted precursors in sight. The Knight, in his proposal of prosecuting Master Nicholas Furnivall, had touched upon one of the very few chords of feeling in the breast of Edward Stanley that was capable of affection from an exterior impulse. Though faithless, treacherous, and in almost every relation virtually dishonest, he despised with bitter contempt the man who would take advantge of the law to avoid what was called an honourable bond; and though he took his own time to discharge the bill of his conscientious tailor, he nevertheless held himself as accountable for it (when fortune, by the death of his father, or some other event, should afford him the means of disbursing the cash), as the *fatui* of Saint James's do for money lost at play. The mean and degrading part, therefore, which Sir Simon Degge had allotted him, could not fail to arouse his proud aristocratic spirit; and it was not until he had rode a considerable distance that his

imagination became more cool, and his reason resumed her empire. When, however, he came to himself, he dismissed at once his anger against the simple Sir Simon, and, drawing up his horse, suffered that personage to come up with him. The Knight did not attain his old station beside his companion without much difficulty, for the brushing gallop into which he had been forced to put his nag, that he might hold Edward Stanley in sight, had complely blown him; and for an hour afterwards he continued to wheeze, snort, and cough, from the bottom of his heart, to the utter consternation of his master, who was in despair lest he should fall beneath him in the the road. The pitiful condition of the poor animal was regarded by Stanley as an excellent joke; and they had not ridden a hundred paces, after Sir Simon had joined company with him, before he burst into a loud laugh; and turning to the Knight, cried, "By my faith, man, thy hobby is as sorry a jade as ever went on four legs."

"Nay, marry," replied the Knight,

with a visage half a yard in length, "he goes but on three legs now; your galloping hath spoiled him."

"Spoiled him!" said Stanley: "he hath been spoiled these ten years at least."

"I'faith, then, it was one year before he was born," answered the Derbyshire Knight; "for he was but nine on May Day."

"Nineteen, thou meanest," said the Soldier: "he's a veteran by the show of his teeth; they stand out like chevaux-de-frise. But what place callest thou this before us?"

"It is Stockport," answered the Knight. "A few miles further, and we shall get among the hills."

Pushing forward at a regular but less violent pace than that with which they left Manchester, the horsemen successively passed through the towns of Stockport and Bullock Smithy, and soon afterwards began to ascend among the mountains. A celebrated poet says,—

"On Derby hills the roads are steep;"

and, truly, Edward Stanley, who had been but little used to hilly countries, found them so. The unbroken rise of one hill, between the small village of Disley and the passage of the Goite, at Whaley (or Wailly) Bridge, he found to be little less than two miles; and the thick-winded nag of Sir Simon bore testimony, by a continual puffing and blowing, to the length and difficulty of the ascent. But the country itself, leaving out of consideration the roads, now began to expand itself before them, in wild and savage, but noble and majestic scenery. It resembled the human character, in its primitive uncultivated condition, before its austerities and its virtues (if we may substitute that term for beauties) are polished and frittered away by the introduction of an effeminating culture. The sight of a well-cultivated country, and of a race perfectly civilized, may afford satisfaction, because the certainty of rich crops, and the stability of social order, are matters which, to us that have undergone the trammels of civilization, are essential to the en-

joyment of life. But it is not the prospect which lies at our own door that produces intense admiration; we view both the country and the people with content, indeed, but not with that heart-stirring gratification which the hoary grandeur of immense mountains, or the sublime spectacle of savage courage and activity, never fail to produce in the minds of the susceptible. What man that has been a spectator of mountain scenery, whether of the frozen Alps, of the bleak but lovely hills of Scotland, of Ireland, of Wales, or of Derbyshire, has not hailed those mountains as the birth-places of great achievement? What race of mountaineers is there existing in Europe, which has not its pride of tradition, its remembered battles and adventures, in a greater degree than the "peasantry of the plain?" The Sons of the Hills are still, and will probably ever remain, a distinct race of men, whose characters are exalted above those of the Lowlanders of equal degree, in courage, in probity, and still more, in moral government. There can be no doubt

but that this elevation of sentiment is caused by the ideas of vastness and immensity, of grandeur and of sublimity, which are unceasingly presenting themselves to their imagination: they revert from the effect to the cause, from the created to the Creator; and in the mountains of the earth, which they gaze upon with awe, they behold so many thrones of that wondrous Spirit whose hand fashioned them, and whose power hath given them an habitation.

The mind of Edward Stanley, callous as it was to most trains of creditable feeling, expanded with somewhat like gratitude to his Creator, for the beauty and sublimity of his providence; but one remark of Sir Simon's broke the thread of his pure delight, and drove away the benignant angel that was distilling the balm of innocent enjoyment upon his restless soul. They had attained the top of the hill, between Disley and Whaley Bridge, and were descending towards the latter place, when the Knight, pointing across a rich and beautiful valley which lay before them, desired Edward Stanley to

survey the crown of a high mountain which skirted the valley on the southern side.

"Yes, I see the hill," replied the Soldier; "thou meanest that one composed of several ledges; it commands the country round, and would be a fine station for a camp of observation."

"I'faith, thou hast forestalled my tidings," said Sir Simon. "I was about telling thee that on the edge of the hill, yonder, where it is precipitous, on the very height itself, there are the remains of a Roman camp, in admirable preservation."

"By the mass, a well-chosen point!" cried Stanley, rising in his stirrups; "and in that day, and against such a foe as they had to cope withal, inexpugnable. But what call ye the hill itself?"

"Combs Moss; which is to say, the Moss of the Valley," answered Sir Simon; "and there is the old town of Chapel of Frith beneath: when we come nigher I will show thee my mansion-house and farm of Bowden; we can see it from

the road, unless thou wouldst choose to halt and refresh at my poor house."

"What canst thou raise for our entertainment?" said Stanley.

Marry, I fear my steward is but poorly provided," said the Knight; "for he hath no notice of company. But if thou lovest salted beef, or pickled pork, or smoked bacon, *aut his similia*, perchance he will not be wanting. I cannot promise ye wine, for my stock was out before I left home. Being a bachelor, Master Stanley, I have always thought it a waste of money to be expensive in my diet. Temperance, sir, is the angel of health. If I had indulged in luxuries, I should not have been the man I am to-day. Ale, sir, ale is much better than wine. It is a more genial liquor; it engenders not the crudities that arise from wine, and hath more stamina in't. This puts me in mind we can find ye some good ale; not to say potent ale o'the double strike, but good, comfortable single ale, that ye will not turn up your nose at."

"I will wager thee my horse for thine, and the odds are somewhat," said his

companion, "that thy ale is no better than verjuice; that my palfrey doth turn up his nose at the smell of it, and yet he will drink ale of a common sort; nay more, that thy beef is maggoty, thy pork stinks, and thy bacon is as rusty as an iron coulter that hath lain abroad six months. Come now, my mettlesome gentleman, wilt thou take me?"

"Nay, I never wager," answered the Knight, gravely; "and as the weather hath been hot, peradventure the ale may have become somewhat sourish. The provision too — heat hath a great power of decomposition; and, i'faith, I cannot answer for't. But I will tell thee how we may have a good meal: I have heard thee boast of thy skill in archery, and we have a host of long bows and cross bows hung around the hall, the honoured evidences of my ancestors' valiancy; now thou mayst with one of these knock down a fat buck, and we will be sure to have it fresh enough."

"Tut, man, thou art not the fool I took thee for," cried the Soldier. "A marvellous good scheme; but I will not

draw rein now, and so I must put off visiting thy mansion until it be better stored. I like to have wine in my quarters. When I come to see thee I will find thy cook business enow. But have ye many deer about ye?"

"Many, quotha?" exclaimed Sir Simon; "I tell thee we are eaten up with them. They swarm upon us like vermin; Kinder, Colbourn, Paisleys, Edale, and Chinley, are full of deer. Nay, there is not such another spot as Sherwood Forest for venison in the queen's dominions."

"Very like; but ye are in the worst part of Sherwood," said Edward Stanley: "you must go further south to see forest land."

"South!" cried the Knight, with that tone of inveterate prejudice in favour of his own country which characterizes every mountaineer; "would ye offer to name the flat lands of the south in comparison with these hills, because they are woodland? And think ye the bits of trunks, and boughs and foliage of timber trees, to hold equal reverence with these giant rocks, that bear up the mantle of

heaven on their shoulders? Pize on it! I thought thou hadst been a travelled man, a lover of the grand and the venerable features of nature, as is every man of a fine imagination."

"Bravo, most learned doctor!" cried Edward Stanley, laughing; "I little thought thou hadst so much of the cant of your travelled man about thee. I see thou hast a genius if thou didst know how to show it off."

Passing the small river Goite, or Mersey, over a bridge of wood, where, at this day, our readers may find one of stone, they ascended an elevated hill, called Eccles Pike, which lies above Chapel en le Frith, and again descending its southern side, approached within a quarter of a mile of that town; but instead of holding forward thereto, or to the Knight's mansion-house at Bowden, they kept a south-east course beneath that hill, whereon Sir Simon had described the Roman camp to be situated. The road, again rising from the level, became uncommonly steep and rugged; and Sir Simon's hobby, as he tugged up its

broken acclivity, cast many a longing look towards Bowden Hall. At length, however, they attained even ground; and the Knight, with kind and considerate concern, besought his companion to make a short halt, whilst their horses recovered their breath. The point upon which they stood, though not the summit of the hill, commanded a very extensive and magnificent prospect. Just beneath lay the little town which they had passed; whilst they could discern the white line of road which they had travelled, winding for several miles among the hills. Rude mountains, piled one above another, formed a distant and imposing amphitheatre; and above all, the bare scalp of Kinder Scout towered up into the heavens in dark and awful majesty.

"Now, sir, behold," said Sir Simon to his companion, "yonder stands Bowdon Hall. See ye not yonder hill?—Nay, thou art looking upon Kinder Scout. I mean the moorish hill, with a break or ravine on the side. Well; thou seest that house beneath, an ancient-looking mansion, not of yesterday."

"'Tis very large," said Edward Stanley.

"Nay, not so very large," answered the Knight; "but peradventure it may seem larger than it is."

"And how dark and wild is it!" exclaimed the Soldier.

"Dark! yea. I assure ye one part of the building was erected in Edward the Third's time, above two hundred years byegone," said Sir Simon; "and the rest on't not later than King Harry the Seventh's. It may look somewhat wild without; for this is a wild country, i'faith."

"Does not the mountain form a part of the country?" said Stanley.

"Yea, to be sure it does," replied the Knight.

"What then didst thou speak of?" said his companion.

"Speak of!" cried Sir Simon; "of Bowdon Hall; of my mansion-house."

"Curse upon your house!" cried the soldier, remounting his horse; "I meant yon bold hill, that looks as grim and

swarthy as if it were the dwelling of fiends,"

"Softly, Master Stanley," said the Knight; "thou wilt not speed the better on thy road for heaping curses on stone and mortar. But yonder is Bowden, if thou hast eyes to see."

"What! that low, straggling, batch of barns," said Stanley, "that seem staggering upon one another for very support? Get thee a pitched stake, stick it into the rafters, and set fire to the house, man; thou wilt make a merry bonfire, and 'tis fit for nought better."

"Bonfire!" ejaculated the indignant proprietor." What would Earl Derby have said to me, had I advised him to make a deflagration of Latham?"

"Dost mate thy cow-house with a palace?" returned Stanley. "Thou mightst pick up stone enough on these rocks to build a house as good as thine."

"Marry, sir, you are ill informed," replied Sir Simon; "for every particle of yon house is of hewn stone; good blocks, and fairly fitted. It costs me I know not how much yearly in mossing and point-

ing. The stone, saith tradition, came from the high point of Kinder, just yonder where thou seest." — The Knight pointed with his riding rod to the distant ridge of Kinder, and continued: "The valleys beneath yonder hill are the wildest in the Peak; and the hills are the boldest and bleakest, Master Stanley. Many are the ballads and rhythms that the Mountaineers tell ye of in the Scout; and if thou hadst patience, I could peradventure bring one to memory, that might give ye a taste or gustation of them."

"Be speedy with thy tale, and I will listen," said Stanley, leaning with some attention upon the shoulder of his horse.

"Marry, then, thou shalt have the Champion's Cross," returned the Knight, which hath been erected of old on the waste on this side of Kinder. The tale, thou wilt perceive, hath been retouched by some modern hand. —

'On Edale top the winds blow bleak,
The thin mists hover daily;
The hind seeks out her covert there,
And the moorcock whistles gaily.

To see her rough and rocky garb,
And Kinder's torrent glancing;
And mark the grouse shoot through the fern,
Is a picture nigh entrancing.

And there to list the thunder roar,
And see the lightning flashing;
While the mountain flood is sweeping down,
And the tumbling rocks are crashing,—

Is trial hard to a feeble heart,
Is proof to the best and boldest;
No mortal but would quake, and his blood
Run slowly at the coldest.

Ay, cold as is that little cross
On Edale summit standing;
When the hoary blast doth beat its head,
Or the snow its foot is banding.

Full many a year hath the winter storm,
Beset that rood so lowly;
Full many a summer's sun hath crept,
O'er its granite transoms slowly.

A pilgrim once had ta'en his seat,
On a stone in that desert lonely,
Where nought in sight was of man's device,
Save that humble cresset only.

And as he looked at that little sign,
And the wild bleak hills around him;
His curious thoughts of its useless scite,
Might well serve to confound him.

"Have these been lands of the warrior-priests?
Is a Hospi'ler's cross unbroken? *
Or is it the tomb of some hardy man,
Who hath left this only token?

* The Templars and Hospitalers were privileged from

This token, that his was no earthly mind,
At wealth or honours grasping;
But one that would climb the highest heaven,
On the wold its treasure clasping.

Hence might he gaze on the stars above,
With no clouds intervening;
Here might he raise his soul to God,
On the turf for his cushion leaning.

Here would the awful and stilly word,
Of his glorious father reach him;
And the whistling winds that shook the bent,
Would be voices apt to teach him."

"A man lies here," slow murmur'd a sound,
With the gusty breezes swelling;
"A hardy man, and a champion Priest,
Doth tenant this little dwelling.

I sought the glittering fame of arms,
I proved the monastic splendour;
But, pilgrim, Happiness knows not these;
Quiet and Peace attend her.

She habits here, on the mountain top,
'Mid the wild she her seat hath chosen;
In the lowly peasant's hardy breast,
Where the germs of ill are frozen.

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tithes, oblations, taxes, &c., and to denote the lands belonging to their preceptories and commandries, it was usual for them to erect crosses thereupon. It was common in those days, also, to set up crosses where the corpse of any of the nobility rested, as it was carried to be buried; and also, it seems, at the place of sepulchre; that 'a transeuntibus pro ejus anima deprecetur.'—*Walsingham*

And better is he, that peasant low,
  Than the man that lords it proudly;
If the worm within doth gnaw his heart,
  And his conscience threaten loudly.

Go, pilgrim, wend thy homeward way,
  While the twilight yet is gleaming;
For now the lingering shade of day,
  On the champion's cross is beaming." *

"Well, what thinkest thou of the ballad?" said the Knight, when he had concluded.

"I would counsel thee to print it at the head of some volume of homilies," replied Stanley. "It will make an excellent prologue."

"Marry, Master Stanley," said the Knight, "thou might'st have been further from home. — But see, Kinder hath got his cap on."

Edward Stanley turned his eyes to

* The tradition of which the above is a metrical version, is current among the wilds of the Upper Peak; and, it is probable, though we cannot speak with certainty, that from the Champion of the Cross, is derived the old and respectable family of Champion, in Edale. The vow of celibacy, taken by the Brothers of the military orders, certainly throws a doubt upon the fact; but the Champion might have lived at the dissolution of the order of the Temple, and afterwards marrying, have founded the above-mentioned house.

the horizon, and beheld a mass of dense clouds settling slowly upon the head of Kinder Scout, which gave it the appearance of being covered with a gauzy cap.

"We shall have rain," said the Knight. "We must either push forward, or turn back to Bowden."

"Nay then," cried Stanley, striking his spurs into his horse, "let us get forward apace."

He put his horse into a high trot; but the road was so extremely bad that he was in constant danger of being thrown down, and, on that account, was obliged once more to draw up. Sir Simon's hobby, much better accustomed to the road, kept his long, clinking pace, bad as it was, without difficulty, and made greater speed than the fretful and impetuous horse of the soldier. They now again began to descend, and losing sight of Chapel en le Frith, passed forward over "moor and mountain" towards Haddon. The warning which Kinder had given the country of a downfal, by assuming his cap, was not a hoax. The sky, which had hitherto been of a clear transparent

azure, now became muddied, the rays of the sun were veiled and shorn of their brilliancy, and scattered masses of lurid thunder-clouds, gradually closed in the horizon, and threatened a storm. Happily the road, though still mountainous, was broader and of a better material than that which they had lately passed, and Edward Stanley, obliging his companions to make use of their spurs, kept them, with a small variation of speed as they ascended a hill, as they were on level ground, or as they descended, at a smart pace, until the Knight drew up, and protested he could not keep up that rate if it were to save his life.

"We have but some five miles to ride," said Sir Simon; "we shall be upon Ashford-in-the-Water forthwith, and I verily think the storm may hold off an hour yet; beside, if it should come on, we can stop at Ashford or Bakewell, which is but a short two miles beyond; so ride gently, I beseech ye; this pestilent trotting hath taken my wind."

"If we have but five miles to go, thou must keep on," cried Stanley; "and let

us house before the storm get up: it will be a fierce burst, by my life."

"I cannot, sir, and I will not," answered the Knight, "my hobby is dead lame, and can hardly get onward. If thou hast no mercy on thy beast, I have on mine. Ride, if it like ye, but I will take my time."

"Crawl, then, like a vile worm as thou art," exclaimed Stanley, with a gathered brow, "and see if that hawbuck of thine can ward thee against the night-riflers of the forest! Ho, Ridgway, onward."

He again dashed off; and Sir Simon, alarmed by his caution, pushed forward, although the lameness of his horse was apparent, and his grimaces and distortions of countenance bore testimony for him that the speed he was obliged to keep was any thing but pleasant or comfortable. They soon reached the small town of Ashford-in-the-Water, where the Knight would willingly have stopped, as much for the purpose of resting his bones, as because the sky now became illuminated by frequent and vivid flashes of lightning, and the thunder began "to rumble

his bellyful" over their heads. Still, however, the soldier kept his pace, and a few minutes riding brought them to Bakewell. Heavy drops of rain now began to fall, accompanied with lightning of a broader glare and more incessant flash, while the thunder bellowed with a continual roar, which appalled the very hearts of all except the daring soldier, who rejected, as before, the Knight's proposal to take shelter.

"Wouldst shelter in the sight of port, man?" cried Stanley. "Yonder are the towers of Haddon. Forward — forward — put thy nag into a gallop, and we shall be in our quarters in five minutes."

As the Knight was not prepared to propound any argument against this assertion, for, in fact, his reasoning faculties were quite paralyzed by the combustion of the elements, he endeavoured with a good grace to follow the counsel of his companion, and using his spurs with a vivacity to which hobby was not accustomed, he succeeded in forcing the lame and wearied animal into some such gallop as Rosinante could perform in

his best career; and never was exertion more timely aroused, for without further warning the rain fell from the clouds in an unbroken sheet, and threatened, not only to wet the horsemen to the skin, but that which was of much greater consequence to Edward Stanley, to spoil the finery of Master Nicholas Furnival. He therefore consented to take shelter while the storm lasted, and the only question now was, where to find it. They had already entered Haddon-park, and Edward Stanley retired beneath a large tree, until the Knight could think of some better accommodation; but Sir Simon was obliged to have recourse to his servant, Septimus, whose knowledge of the country was much greater than that of his master.

"There's no house that I know," said Septimus, "nigher than Bakewell, save it be Gilbert Onshaw's, and it's gain enow."

"Lead us to it, good fellow," said Stanley.

"Ay, sure," answered the man; and turning his horse into the wood, he

trotted on at a round speed. In a short time they perceived a rude cabin, built beneath a hill, which formed one side of the cottage, and embowered in a grove of sycamores. It was a secluded spot where a hermit might have lived "far remote from public view," and have devoted his hours to prayer and praise, to repentance and meditation without notice or interruption; or where a character of a different stamp, — a poacher, for instance, such as Ollerenshaw, might dwell in the exercise of his vocation, if he were but prudent, with unrestrained liberty; and the more especially as Sir George Vernon, though rigorous, when he had offenders in his power, was lax and careless in their detection.

Having gained an open space of ground in front of the cottage, Edward Stanley leaped from his horse, and applying his hand to the door, endeavoured to enter without ceremony; but he found his familiarity repulsed. The door was fastened, and he called several times without receiving any answer.

"Holloa! Gilbert, man," cried Sir Simon's retainer; "open the door."

"Curse Gilbert for a lazy villain," cried Edward Stanley; "if he comes not the sooner, I will stave the door in. Holloa! within there. — False knave, will ye open the door? This suit, that is worth more than his house and gear, will be utterly spoiled. — What, ho!"

At length some person approached the door, and unbarring it with great caution, thrust out his head, and enquired what they wanted; but the furious soldier, already boiling with rage, dashed the door back in his face with such violence as to throw him on the ground, and striding over him entered the cottage. The man, who although of an ancient aspect was exceedingly grim and active, started upon his feet, and running to the chimney, took down an old sword.

"Who are ye," he cried, with a bold and loud voice, "that dare come into Gilbert Onshaw's house against his will?"

"Why, the fiend, did not Gilbert Onshaw open the door?" replied Stanley. "If thou hadst not come when thou didst, I would have broken it into staves to beat thee withal, villain!"

"I wot, proud fellow, thou art but strange i'this country," said the man fiercely, "or thy wit would na roo after this fashion. I can ca' as many lads as will lay thy feather i'the brook wi'a whistle o'my fingers."

"Dost threaten me, rascal?" cried Stanley, drawing his rapier. "Villain, lay down thy shabble, or I'll stake thy body to the ground."

"I'll lay it upon thy skull," cried the man, assaulting Stanley with great violence; but he only made one stroke, which his antagonist caught upon his dagger, and in a moment he was disarmed, and at the mercy of his furious enemy, who grappled him fiercely by the throat. The poacher's fate had been sealed if the attention of Stanley had not been aroused by a piercing shriek, which he found to proceed from the poacher's daughter, — the pretty Rose,

— who rushed between them, and implored the soldier to spare the life of her father.

"Indeed, sir," cried the damsel, planting her great sparkling black eyes upon Stanley, "my father deemed ye were thieves, or he would na have denied ye shelter."

"Would he not, cherry cheeks?" cried the youth; "then for thy sake I will not deny him mercy. — But see, sirrah," he continued, in a fierce tone, as he relaxed his fingers from the throat of the poacher, "how thou withstand men of blood for time coming. Take our horses to shelter, and bid those persons come hither."

Ollerenshaw, with an air which betokened more reverence for his strength and courage than for his blood, bowed to his mandate, and leaving the cottage, took their horses to a shed adjoining. Sir Simon Degge entered the cabin with a quaking heart; for having, though outside of the door, been a witness of the rencounter that took place within, he was fearful that Ollerenshaw would make

good his threat, and call an overpowering assistance. He was much gratified, however, to see him return into the cabin, bearing upon his shoulders a large log of fuel, which he threw upon the fire.

"Come, wench, bestir thee," he said to Rose; "see what thou canst give these gentlemen to drink, and mayhap they'll taste of thy dairy. Ye see, sirs, we are but poor folk, and his worship gies us the lay of a beast; it maes out like."

"I know a' about thee, Gilbert," said Sir Simon's servant.

"What, Septimus!" cried Ollerenshaw, holding out his hand, "I swear I did na know thee, lad. Sir Simon Degge, I trow."

"Yea, I am that knight," replied Sir Simon, taking off his cloak.

"Sure ye are," answered the man; "I know ye well enow, now your cloak's drawn. I saw ye t'other day hunting i'the park wi' his worship."

"Very like," replied the Knight,

" and this young gentleman, with whom you have unfortunately—"

" Let that rest, an it please ye," said Ollerenshaw.

" Is Master Stanley —" continued the Knight.

" What ! Sir Thomas, that was with you at Haddon ?" cried the man; " sure, I hope not, for folks speak on him as the best gentleman that ever came into our country."

" Nay, this is Master Edward Stanley, brother of Sir Thomas," replied the Knight, looking towards the soldier, who was talking and laughing with Rose ; " he is another kind of man, very noble and generous i'the main, but hot and passionate as the wild devil himself. It was no fault of mine that thou wert abused, bear that in mind ; and if any word of mine can help thee with the Vernon, speak out. — I have some weight."

The Knight made this propitiation with great gravity ; but the poacher, whether he did not stand in need of Sir George's favour, or thought it was not

to be obtained by the mediation of Sir Simon, made no reply, but assisted his daughter to place articles of refreshment on the board. These were attacked with great courage by Sir Simon and the two servants; but Edward Stanley drank only one cup of ale, wherein he pledged the bright eyes of Rose Ollerenshaw.

"Prithee, wench," cried Stanley, "how many sweethearts hast thou raised in this wilderness? We owe much to the storm for forcing us upon such a lily of the valley."

The damsel blushed, and smiling with great archness, replied, "Do folk ask such like questions in your country? an they did in ours, they'd be laugh'd at belike—"

"But wilt thou have me for one?" said the soldier.

"Yea, marry, will I," answered Rose, laughing; "but ye must na make love to me before any other man, and ye must na tell what passes atween us—else ye'll never get a true love i'the Peak, beleddy."

"By St. Bride," cried Stanley, "I will

deliver myself up to thy instruction. Thou shalt convert me into a perfect wooer after the Derbyshire fashion: under such a tutor I shall improve suddenly."

"If the maiden is in want of *discipuli*," said Sir Simon, giggling, "I should have no objection to put myself into her pupilage. What say'st thou, pretty one, canst thou find time to give a few lessons to a man that has reached his prime without learning one rudiment of love?"

"Marry, sir, when gentlemen get long beards like your Worship's," said Rose, "they're clean past teaching."

The Knight was interrupted in attempting a repartee by a gentle knock at the door. Ollerenshaw himself opened it, and admitted two men.

CHAP. V.

What say'st thou, my good captain of copper?
To answer every challenger o'the camp,
To head the sortie, or the escalade,
And dare the deeds of most adventurous peril
Among the curst mad spirits of the age: —
And sooth for what? Is't not to be accounted,
Among the grave and sensible o'the world,
A most notorious and invincible fool?

The Reformado Captain.

The strangers were both men of large proportions, but one of them, who soon denoted himself to be the son of Gilbert Ollerenshaw, by calling the pretty Rose sister, was at least six feet and a half in height, with a remarkable breadth of shoulder and squareness of joint. He was of a dark and savage countenance, with an eye that beamed as much of fierceness as his sister's did of love, and seemed in every respect well adapted to the active and precarious occupation which his father and himself were engaged in.

The other man was of a frame less bulky and herculean, but which still shewed an ample quantity of muscle and sinew. He was apparently a year or two older than Edward Stanley, and his countenance was as comely as his form was stalwart and muscular. They were both clad in forester's green, and were armed with short swords, the usual weapons of woodmen. On entering the cottage, the son of Gilbert eyed Stanley and the rest with great scrutiny ; but the young soldier, too eager after his game to mind aught beside, bestowed all his attention upon Rose, without deigning one glance to her brother or his companion. Sir Simon, still fearful of the poacher's sincerity, regarded their entrance with suspicion, and careful not to draw their vengeance upon himself by giving offence, he sat silent, edging in a glance now and then at the new comers from the corners of his eyes. At length, when their quiet deportment assured him that they did not meditate any evil purposes towards himself and his friends, he recovered his spirits, and took courage to

ask if the storm had abated. But the younger Ollerenshaw and his companion were too busily engaged in devouring their supper to hear this interrogatory.

"Dost thou not hear, Anak?" said Rose; "the gentleman asks thee if the storm is by."

"No, marry, it winna be this hour, I trow," answered Anak; "its e'en now got up; we shan ha' Wye in a flood, an its o'er."

"What, above the bridge?" said Sir Simon, anxiously.

"Yea; 'tis like it will," replied Anak. "Last year, a summer fresh carried away one of the arches, and the rain fell here yesternight as though the sea had been sucked up, and were let out on us."

"Then we must proceed, Master Edward Stanley," said the Knight, rising up, "or we shall not get to Haddon to-night."

"I am right well content to stay here until morning," replied the soldier; "I will take up my quarters with this bonny wench. So thou mayst ride, Sir Knight, and I will tarry."

"Ay, marry, but what will Sir George say?" cried the Knight.

"He will say, if he says aught," replied Stanley, "that thou wert but a wittol to quit a pretty wench to encounter such a storm. So ride, Knight, if it list ye, and leave me to my fortune."

"I would fain stop," said the Knight, unwilling to set forward without his companion. "But how do ye propose to get to Haddon if the bridge be overflowed?"

"I will swim my horse through the flood," said Stanley.

"He will not breast it, Sir Cavalier," said Anak Ollerenshaw, "I will lay my life to a portcluse noble."

"And if he did not," replied Stanley, warmly, "I would strike him dead beneath me with a dagger-stroke: but he shall be tried. I will undergo this adventure for fair Rose's sake."

"Nay, dunna for mine," cried the rustic beauty, "for 'tis like ye may be drowned, and then I should na rest night nor day for your spreet. No, marry, go now, and safely, sooner than

be carried off wi' the flood; 'tis right fearful when the water's up."

"Fear not, pretty Rose," said Stanley, "I have a spirit that upholds me against all peril and hazardous adventure; — shot and steel, fire and water have no power against my life. I am charmed against the elements."

"Belike you are a fairy," cried the damsel, archly.

"He is a soldier, fair Rose," said Sir Simon, "that knoweth no fear; but is rather, begging his pardon, fool-hardy."

"And thou, without begging thy pardon, art fool-craven," retorted Stanley; "thou wouldst convert the dribble of a mountain-stream into the fierce swell of a mighty river."

"It is no proof of courage, Master Edward Stanley," said the Knight, "to put your life in jeopardy without occasion; but thou wilt find the Wye no rivulet, or I am no judge of the matter."

"I never said thou wast a judge of aught;" said Stanley, "unless it were of detecting choice editions of classic fa-

bles; thou mayst know somewhat of Caxton's type, or that of Aldus; but the devil a thing that is honourable or seemly. But get thee to horse, and leave me here. I would not quit this rose of the wood for some hours to come if the sun were shining, and thou wouldst give me a thousand crowns."

"My wench does na detain ye, sir," said Gilbert Ollerenshaw. "If you deem her a wanton that hawks about for stray gentry, I must be bold enow to tell ye your shot rambles."

"Thou art bold enough for aught, I'll be sworn," replied the soldier with contempt; "but I shall tarry here or go as befits my pleasure, not thine, churl."

"It shews na much courtesy, "said Anak, rising from his seat, "for a sheltered man to despite his host."

"Sheltered, villain!" exclaimed Stanley.

"Ay, sheltered," returned Anak, "and yet no villain of thine, or I should own a sorry lord."

"By my faith, good fellow," cried Stanley, laying his hand upon his sword

hilt, "if thou hadst not called this wench sister, I would have slain thee on thine own hearth."

"I would not have thee let thy hand for that," replied Anak, laughing. "Rose will not blench while I have a sword at my thigh. Thou art over dainty to have such a swaggering tongue."

"Rest thee, Anak, rest thee, my lad," said his father, pulling him by the sleeve, "thou dost na know this man,—he will slay thee."

"He wears too fine a doublet," said Anak, with a sneer, "to trust himself within the cross of my weapon."

"Dog!" cried Stanley, striking him a fierce blow upon the head with his left hand, and drawing his rapier with his right, "I will cut thee into mince meat."

"Then thou shalt eat me thyself," replied the undaunted woodman, drawing his shabble.

As it had before happened with his father, however, Anak was disarmed in a few moments by his foe, at whose mercy he stood naked and defenceless; and so little gifted was Edward Stanley with

humanity, that he would have slain the unfortunate rustic on the spot had not his sword-hand been arrested by the stranger that came into the cottage with the fallen Anak, and who now proved his protecting angel. Edward Stanley struggled violently to release his sword, but he could not shake off the powerful grasp which withheld it.

"You would not slay him?" said the stranger, in a calm but resolute voice: "he is conquered, and at your mercy."

"I will shew none to him or thee," cried the enraged soldier, "if thou dost not release my sword."

"I am no party in this broil, sir," returned the stranger, "as you may perceive; but your own insolence hath brought it on. Be it as it may, I will not stand by and see a man murthered."

"Murthered!" cried Stanley. "Hath he not opposed me point to point, as a fair foe? I have vanquished him, and I may save or slay him at my pleasure."

"He was no match for a skilful swordsman, like the soldier Stanley," returned the stranger; "as well might

an ox attack a lion, as this untutored lad oppose you in combat."

"Ay, i'faith, Master Stanley," cried Sir Simon Degge, who now came forth from a corner where he had hid himself on the first clash of the weapons, "let us be all friends—the lad meant ye no harm—I'll be his warrant; besides, as justice o' the peace, I do approve this person's conduct in binding thy weapon, and I call upon all present to be aiding and assisting me in the preservation of Her Majesty's peace. I will, o' my faith, prosecute the first man that strikes another stroke."

The Soldier smiled in scorn of the Justice's authority, and said, "For the love of sweet lips there, I will spare this insolent churl; and let me counsel thee, fellow, never again rate a man after his appearance. But thou art a bold-hearted lad notwithstanding, and here is somewhat for thy guerdon."

He drew out his purse, and, with his accustomed lavish bounty, tossed a gold rial to Anak; who, as he caught it, re-

laxed his gloomy and savage features, and grinned with delight. Stanley then approached the damsel, and, after saluting her with a hearty kiss, slipped a golden buckle from the belt of his dagger, and put it into her hands.

"This wear thou for my remembrance, pretty Rose," said the Soldier; "it will serve for thy holiday belt.—Now, Sir Knight, to horse."

He took his cloak from his servant, and put it on, whilst Sir Simon disposed his hood so that the skirts and tippet amply protected his neck and shoulders. The horses were now brought out of the shed, and Stanley, throwing down a piece of money for their entertainment, without deigning to speak to Ollerenshaw, mounted his courser; but Sir Simon, to make up for his want of courtesy, and for that which was quite as important, his own scantiness of liberality, took his leave of the poacher and his family with an abundance of thanks.

"You seem to know me," said Edward Stanley, in a low voice, to the stranger, who stood at the door of the cottage,

"and I have heard somewhat of you; you bear the name of outlaw, but fear not that I will betray you. Your defiance to-night has given me too great cause to hate you to gather revenge but with my own sword: be sure I will give you an opportunity of showing your gentle breeding."

"I have no title to compete with the gallant Stanley in arms," replied the stranger, with great modesty; "nor have I desire to commence a quarrel with you; but if you force my honour, you shall not find me a laggard."

"'Tis right well, Sir Outlaw; thou art of good mettle, I'll be sworn. Farewell; it is getting fair again."

The Soldier spurred his horse towards the avenue by which they had entered, but was arrested in his progress by the voice of Anak, calling to him to stop.

"What dost thou want?" replied Stanley.

"An ye will go easily," returned Anak, "I'll go wi' ye to the bridge; an it be flooded, ye'll scarce know which is

the best ground to take water, and I can show you belike."

"Thou art an honest fellow, i'faith," cried the Knight.

"I would fain ha' that name," replied Anak, archly; "but folk winna let me."

"And why not?" said the Knight.

"Because they say I steal," answered the woodman with great composure.

"And dost thou so?" enquired Sir Simon.

"No, bless ye, not I," returned Anak; "I'm as innocent o' aught that should na be as your worship—this way, an it list ye; it's a nigh turn."

The storm had now in a great degree exhausted its violence, but left behind it so sombre a gloom, that although it was scarcely nine o'clock, it was as dark as if the shades of night had closed in. Still, however, there was light sufficient to catch glimpses of the castle, as its high towers appeared through the vistas of the wood, and to avoid the waters, which, overflowing the banks of the river, changed the serpentine sweeps of the

Wye into one broad and headlong torrent, which occupied the whole valley beneath the hall. In a short time they emerged from the wood, and keeping the horse-road, arrived at that part of it which led down to the bridge by which the river was usually passed. No bridge was now to be seen; but instead thereof a boiling whirlpool, threatening destruction to every thing that came within its vortex. The waters at this place were at least three hundred yards in breadth, and extended to the very foot of the castle, which stands on a bold rock, on the east side of the river, high enough to overlook the whole valley of Haddon, and surrounded with a wood of ancient oaks that were probably coeval with its foundation: some of these were now deeply imbedded in the torrent, which, rushing past them with inconceivable fury, dashed its foam and spray over their topmost branches.

"What think ye now?" said Anak, regarding Edward Stanley with a signifi-

cant smile: "the flood is out; I ne'er saw it waur i' my day; it raums o'er the bridge, look ye, high enow."

"Marry, I will post back to Bakewell," said Sir Simon.

"What then, thou art poltroon enough to let me run this hazard alone?" said Stanley, turning to the Knight.

"Thou dost sure never mean to tempt this boiling flood?" replied Sir Simon.

"As sure as thy name is Simon Degge I will pass this flood, dead or alive," returned Stanley.

"Ye will perish horse and man," said Anak; "nought could baffle these waters for half a minute."

"Here's for the trial," cried Stanley, spurring his horse into a gallop down the bank.

"Stay, stay!" cried Anak; "if ye will pass it, there is better ford below."

But he had already reached the river, and, with ungovernable presumption, dashed amid the waters, which soon took his horse off his feet. Sir Simon Degge, with Anak Ollerenshaw and the two servants, stood upon the bank, watching

with anxious hearts the issue of this frantic adventure. For some time, notwithstanding the fury of the flood, the Soldier kept his horse's head turned against the stream, which broke over and engulphed them in its abysses; but the vigorous animal, shaking the water from his mane, again bore his rider above the surface, and stemmed the torrent. This, however, could not last long. The horse, whose vigour was much impaired by his long day's march, grew momentarily weaker; and at length, unable to contend with the raging element, he was once more, with his rider, buried beneath the waves. Again he rose in the very midst of the current, but with his head down the stream; and Stanley threw off his cloak to lighten his burthen. His hat and haughty plume he had lost in the first dash of the waters over him. By this time Sir Simon Degge, and those with him, could perceive that the castle was alarmed, and could observe many persons issue from the gate, and make their way, though with considerable dif-

ficulty, beneath the walls of the castle, down the bank of the river; but it was not light enough to discern, at the distance they stood, who the persons were. The Knight, notwithstanding the sullen roar of the waters, could hear distinctly their shouts to the desperate Soldier, directing him, as Sir Simon supposed, where to make his landing. But before he could avail himself of their counsel, he was once more overwhelmed by the flood, and for a considerable space neither horse nor man made his appearance.

"He is lost!" exclaimed the Knight, wofully; "he is the martyr of his presumption."

And indeed so thought all; for they gazed upon the roaring flood with eyes of terror and dismay; and Sir Simon, heart sick with affright, was about to turn his horse round to go back to Bakewell, when he was restrained by a loud shout from those on the opposite bank.

"He is up," cried Anak, springing into a tree like a wild cat; "I see him; and, by Saint Thomas, he buffets man-

fully. An he can howd it for five minutes wi' half the strength he twisted the sword owt o' my hand, he'll win the shore."

"The horse is drowned!" said the Knight.

"Yea, he doesna rise," replied Anak; "he's gone to the trout and lampreys."

"Dost see him now?" cried the Knight, averting his eyes from the water; "does he live yet?"

"Yea, he lives—alack! he is down—he canna head such whelming swells," uttered Anak; "but now he rises again; and that wave hath pitched him nigh the shore; he touches it belike—ay he does; a murrain on it! the flood hath washed him off; now he's on again, and they get hold on him—he's safe. The devil hath holpen him, sure."

The Knight, on again looking towards Haddon, beheld a number of persons bearing a body to the castle; and having thus satisfied himself that his companion had not perished, turned his horse into the road, and, followed by his own servant and the valet of Edward Stanley,

returned to Bakewell. Anak, whose curiosity was more powerful, stood upon the bank until they had conveyed the insensible Soldier into the castle. He then turned away from the waters, and whistling a tune, darted into the wood.

Leaving the Derbyshire Knight to provide himself quarters at Bakewell, it is our province to attend upon Edward Stanley, who fainted in the arms of the men who dragged him out of the water. Though ignorant of his person, they yet perceived by his dress that he was a man of quality, and conveyed him with great care into the hall of the castle, where they laid him at full length on one of the dining tables. At first he seemed quite dead; his cheeks and lips, and his hands, even to the finger-ends, were of that pale and deathly hue which bespreads a corpse immediately after the spirit has departed: his eyes were closed; and his long black hair, which he usually wore curled, after the fashion of the times, now fell upon his neck and forehead, covering them with its profusion. The water which he had swallowed in his conflict with the

waves, flowed freely from his mouth and nostrils; while an occasional spasm, after he had lain a few moments, discovered to his attendants that he was still alive. While he lay in this state, the lord of the mansion, Sir George Vernon, came from a small withdrawing-room into the hall, and ordered his house-doctor to speed his attendance.

"The man will drown on dry land," cried Sir George, "if ye be not speedy."

"The Doctor hath gone for his instruments," said one of the servants.

"Then do thou follow him," cried the Knight, "and bring him back on thy shoulders — a craftless brute, to toy away his time when a minute may save or mar his patient! What, ho, Doctor, fool! — See ye how he comes; the very essence of all diseases in his proper person. What the fiend art thou for doing to this man, or to this dead body, 'tis like by this time?"

"With your honour's leave," replied the disciple of Æsculapius, with all humility, "I would prescribe the gentleman

medicamentum vomitorium—afterwards it will be proper *medicamentum catharticum adhibere*, to prevent or assuage fever; afterwards —"

"The fiend swallow thy damned drugs!" exclaimed the passionate Knight. "Thou wouldst convert Haddon into a charnel-house. How wilt thou get a lifeless body to take down thy medi—vomiting—what dost call it?"

"Then, with your worship's leave," said the operator; "we should endeavour by warmth and the chafing his limbs, to restore a regular circulation of the blood."

"Strip him," said Sir George; "and set two or three grooms to give him a hand-rubbing: they'll soon bring his blood into play if he hath any. Stir, villains."

The servants, at the furious voice of their lord, stripped the Soldier to his shirt in a few moments, and commenced a rigorous assault upon his limbs and body; which they continued, without intermission, until every part assumed a rosy and healthful colour, and a strong

and heavy sigh proceeded from the patient, who immediately after opened his eyes.

"What is't ye are about?"—said Stanley, in a feeble voice, and without raising his eyes, which, by their wildness, betokened but a partial restoration of the senses;—"Ridgway!"

"Why, 'tis Ned Stanley," cried Sir George Vernon aloud; "or the devil hath taken his likeness. What a blunt-witted fellow must I be not to know an old friend? Ned, rouse thee, lad."

"Why do ye bawl thus in my ears?" said Stanley. "I am beset enough with the infernal roar of the waters. Who art thou, fellow?"

"Knowest thou not the Vernon?" answered Sir George. "Thou art within Haddon towers, safe enough from water and fire too."

The youth raised his eyes to the face of the speaker, and instantly pushing aside the servants, sprang from the table, and stood upright in the hall. The Knight laughed heartily at the plight

he was in, and ordered his chamberlain to fetch him dry clothes.

"What has become of Ridgway and Sir Simon Degge?" said Stanley. "Have they perished?"

"What! Is Degge with ye?" said Sir George.

"Ay; we came from Lathom since day-break," replied Stanley. "Like a fool, I left him, on the bank yonder, to do this mad deed. I would I had had my finger chopped off ere I undertook it. I have lost the best horse that ever carried man in field of sport or battle."

"Rot thy horse!" cried the Knight of Haddon. "Thou art safe; and shouldst be content. But whither are your fellows gone?"

"They have gone back to Bakewell," said one of the domestics; "we saw them leave the bank, and ride that way, when we brought Master Stanley into the hall."

"It would have been a tale worth telling," said Sir George, "had Degge offered at the flood; he's too dainty

of his gaunt carcase to run haphazard at any price. But why stand ye here, villains, looking at a naked man? Bring fuel to the fire, and meat to the table."

"Nay, hold sirs," cried Stanley to the servants, who, in obedience to the orders of their lord, were flying away in various directions; "let us have no fire; and in place of your venison pasty, let me have some wine. I must swallow a full flaggon to drown the sea of water I have shipped to-night."

The chamberlain now returned with a suit of clothes, which had fitted Sir George Vernon when he was much younger and less bulky in his figure. They were consequently of a fashion rather dateless; and consisted of the straight pourpoint and wide gascon breeches fashionable in the reign of Henry the Eighth. The Knight of Haddon could not withhold his laughter, when he saw Stanley arranged in a garb so striking a contrast to his own rich suit, which lay upon the table saturated with

water, and with a roar of laughter exclaimed, "Why, Ned, I'll be sworn, thou art the very counterpart of Sir Harry Vernon's picture in the gallery. He and Prince Arthur stole away from that griping Lombard, Harry the Seventh, many a good time, and caroused in this hall till the roof rang again. He was one of the prince's governors; and, by the rood, he governed him to purpose."

"With submission," said the Doctor, "it is not well that the patient be so suddenly disordered. His nerves are perturbed, ruffled, unnaturally excited. If he be not restrained from agitation, we shall not overcome the evil: his spirits may seem high from the prolongation of the muscular disorder; but it will be only *pax simulata*. He will still be *malo impletus*."

"What the devil!" exclaimed Sir George furiously, "doest wish to raise a mutiny? Wouldst clap a padlock on my mouth in my own house? Get thee to thy drugs and doses, and leave me to

play the leech. I will find some physic that shall set Ned Stanley afoot sooner than all the simples in thy vocabulary."

"I wash my hands of the patient," said the Doctor solemnly.

"Out with thee, sirrah!" replied the Knight, "or I will wash my hands of thee. Your priests and doctors are the plagues of good living. You must fashion your conscience and your constitution by square and rule; and they must be craftsmen, forsooth, or your body goes to the dogs, and your soul to the devil."

"There is your fee, Sir Doctor," said Stanley, presenting him with a piece of money; "and now thou wilt leave me to follow my own course. Thou mayst credit me I will bring no disgrace upon thy counsel. I will be as staid and sober as a maid on her marriage-morning."

"Truly, I can see your honour hath a pre-eminent soundness and hardihood of constitution," replied the Doctor, with a low bow. "Your honour may somewhat indulge; for I see not the hectic flushes, the floodings and revulsions of the blood in the vessels of the head, that

are usual in these cases. His worship will do you justice. A bottle of canary will give your spirits a regular temperature."

"What, thou doest double, dost a?" cried the Knight. "That bit of metal hath opened thine eyes to the soundness and hardihood of his nature. But do thou see some wine put into the cooler in my chamber, and thou shalt thyself regulate what we are to drink."

"Nay, I will see it done incontinently," answered the Doctor, leaving the hall. "It doeth give me proud delight to become the arch-priest of so noble a libation."

"That fellow's none so bad a mate when ye can rid him of his jargon," said Sir George. "At first, he's as stiff as an ox; but a piece of gold or a bottle of canary, makes him as supple as an eel. He can, moreover, drink as deeply as ye would wish. That mawkin carcase of his never shows fairly till it be puffed out with wine or strong ale, and will hold a full flaggon without bursting buckle or strap. He and Simon Degge

are as fair a match as ever I saw i' the Bear Garden. The Knight growls and frets upon his dignity; while the Doctor snaps and barks around him until he be fairly run down and baffled at controversy. We will have a gay fling when Degge comes. But where's Dorothy Vernon? Ho, knaves! where's my daughter?"

"May it please your worship," replied an upper domestic, "she hath retired to her chamber long since."

"It doth not please my worship," cried the Knight; "call her down. Say a friend hath arrived, and she must do him hospitality."

"Nay, by your leave," cried Stanley, "I will not have the Lady Dorothy disturbed to-night. I should fright her senses away if she saw me in this dress. Beside, it is late, and she is perhaps abed. It would be uncourteous to arouse her, and I would not so soon have her mingle my name with churlishness."

"Have it as thou wilt, Ned Stanley," said Sir George. "Both this house and the lord on't are at thy bidding.

Doth it please thee to withdraw to my chamber?"

"Ay, lead the way;" answered the Soldier.

They then quitted the hall, and retired to the private sitting-room of the knight of the mansion.

CHAP. VI.

With that he led him with a courtly air
Into a chamber —
Come, sit thee down, and taste our choicest food;
We entertain, quoth he, no vulgar guest.
THE SQUIRE OF DAMES.

THE Knight ushered his young guest into a small room which he commonly used for his own occupation, and which was separated from the hall by a short passage. It was wainscotted with oak, and around the frieze or upper cornice were carved the arms of the Lords of Haddon. At one side there was a recess, in which a bow-window overlooked the lower garden; whilst, at the upper end of the chamber, a casement opening upon the principal court, enabled Sir George to observe those who entered it before they approached the hall.

The furniture of this snug apartment was not remarkable so much for its rich-

ness, as for its comfort and convenience. There was nothing superfluous, nothing too good for use; all was plain, homely, and substantial. Couches and chairs with high backs and cushioned, the covers of which were wrought with needle-work, and massy tables of carved oak, gave the room a habitable and domestic appearance; and the ornamented andirons, a few portraits spread over the wainscot, and sporting instruments hung around, denoted the chamber to belong to the lord of the castle. At this time, notwithstanding the heat of summer, a brisk fire blazed in the wide chimney; and a leaden cistern stood in the middle of the floor, filled with water, for the purpose of cooling the wine brought to table. In a short time the Doctor made his appearance with a sufficient quantity of good liquor; and after seeing his patron and Stanley seated, took his post between the table and the cistern, for the purpose of playing the part of butler in their debauch. And he had soon an opportunity of displaying his dexterity in that office; for the Knight of Had-

don and his guest made but few draughts of a bottle, and the Æsculapian himself had not that singular abhorrence of wine for which Dr. Sangrado was remarkable in his early years. He drank with his companions cup for cup, and with each succeeding draught his craving seemed more insatiable. By degrees the conversation of Sir George Vernon and Edward Stanley, which had hitherto turned upon the perils of his late adventure, took a direction which, had not the spirit of the wine mounted into their heads, they would probably have retained for a private interview. All the adventures of Stanley since his arrival in England, except what had passed between Margaret Vernon and him, the young Soldier related at full length to the Knight of Haddon, and explained to him his own views of the effects of their meditated revolution.

"But for the present," he continued, "the game is up. The Jesuit and Sparandum are sunk to rise no more, and our hope of Earl Derby is blasted. Had he but seconded our enterprise, it is not

the trick of moderation that should have kept Elizabeth her throne."

"By my faith," cried Sir George, "I could have raised ye a pretty squadron i'the Peak; tall and stout fellows, with hearts of steel and bones of iron; skilful in arms to the boot: men that would not flee in a shock with disciplined forces. But what is to be done?"

"Done?" replied Stanley; "we must give Granvelle * notice of our mishap, of the loss of his expedition. Let him and the Duchess of Parma hunt out some other scheme to raise the country, and we will soon profit by the commotion. We must have more money, more arms and men, a new flota, fresh commissioners. By the bye, we have lost little in Sparandum; he was a brute of courage, but as dull as an owl. The holy father was keen enough, but lacked the spirit of execution."

"The two made one good man," said Sir George.

* Cardinal Granvelle, Bishop of Arras, minister of the Low Countries under the Duchess of Parma, governor for Philip of Spain.

"Homo bene præditus," edged in the Doctor, with a countenance of hesitating modesty.

Whilst engaged in their treasonable conference, Sir George Vernon and Edward Stanley, wrapt in their own thoughts and designs, appeared to have forgotten that there was a third person in company; and the voice of the Doctor sounded as strangely to their hearing as that of a spirit would have done, had it risen up between them. The Knight frowned fiercely; whilst Edward Stanley, without moving a muscle, bent his eye upon vacancy, and listened for a repetition of the voice. After some time, when no sound could be heard, the Soldier sprang from his seat, and fixing his eyes upon the leech with sudden consciousness that it was he that had spoken, he drew his dagger, and seized him by the throat.

"Is this fellow in our secret?" he said to the Knight; "or if he be not, is he sound and loyal? May he be trusted?"

The Knight did not immediately an-

swer, and Edward Stanley, pushing Probus back in his chair, raised his murtherous weapon aloft.

"Hold your hand!" exclaimed the Doctor, wofully clasping his hands together. "Doth not his worship entrust me with his life daily? Speak, Sir George; have I not been ever faithful? How should an old retainer seek the death of his lord?"

"But thou hast thrust thyself into the knowledge of that," cried Stanley, "which, but whispered, would draw ruin and death upon the Vernon's house and mine; our lives and honour are not to be hazarded upon the breath of such a slave as thou art. Such a worm had better be crushed, than we live in doubt of treachery."

He again raised his hand, and looked to Sir George Vernon, to whom the Doctor also turned his imploring eyes. "I knew not of your secret, by Saint Anthony!" he cried, with great tribulation; "I could not seek to know it. Noxa sequitur caput; let him take physic that needs it."

"He durst not betray us," said Sir George Vernon; "thou mayst sheathe thy dagger. But if thou doest ever breathe word upon what has passed, I will hang thee up on the highest tree in Haddon Park;—thy bones shall rattle a hollow warning to all traitors to come."

"Nay, but if such high-born gentlemen will condescend to the fellowship of so humble a man as I am," replied the Doctor, "I am ready to prove my loyalty to Sir George, by joining heart and hand in his fortunes."

"Wilt thou do so, good fellow?" cried the Knight. "That word hath bettered thy fortunes, I'll be sworn. But how sayst thou, Ned Stanley, is there nought Probus can execute? he hath a ready wit; and, leaving out his cursed galenicals, a flowing elocution. Would he not serve to bear our message to Flanders?"

"Ay, if you dare trust him," answered Edward; "he seems well fitted for such office."

"I durst well trust him, if thou art so minded," returned the Knight. "But if thou dost feel doubtful of his faith, he

shall bide with me, and we will send some other."

"Let him be sworn on the morrow," said Stanley, sheathing his poniard; "if he then betray us, the stroke of my dagger would be but the tickling of a feather to what he will suffer in marring a cause so holy. Not for our individual interests do we raise the banner of rebellion, but for the weal of the church, the exaltation of our faith, which is now thrown down and trampled in the mire."

"Ha! that indeed is a consideration fraught with potency," cried Doctor Probus; "a matter which should withhold every true Catholic from all designs and desires but that pre-eminent one of our holy Mother's sublimation. Ha! let us shave our heads; let us fast in sackcloth and ashes; let us spare not for stripes and mortifications, offerings and prayers of intercession, until the veil be withdrawn, and the sun of our glorious church shine forth again with naked splendour."

"Hast thou been abroad?" said Stanley to the Doctor.

"Yea, I studied physic at Leyden," replied Probus; "and medicina chirurgica at Paris. I have seen Brussels, Antwerp, and all other cities of note in the Low Countries."

"Dost know the Bishop of Arras?" said Stanley.

"I have seen his excellency at the Spanish minister's, Ruy Gomez de Silva," returned the Doctor.

"Thou knowest the Prince of Eboli?" said the Soldier.

"Yea; for while he was joined in the regency of Flanders, I had the honour of attending his highness frequently in my faculty!" answered Probus. "My good lord, Sir George, gave me licence to remain abroad for improvement in chirurgery."

"Is it not true," said Sir George to Stanley, "that the Duke of Alva, Eboli's enemy, hath now much weight touching the rule of Flanders?"

"Ay, true indeed; his military crest hath lowered the plume of Ruy Gomez," cried Stanley. "The Flemings must have a soldier for their regent. The Duchess

of Parma is a woman of rare talent, sensible, ingenious, and profoundly skilled in the arts of government; but she is but a woman, and hath a woman's sickliness of spirit when a work of resolute severity is to be achieved. Her gentleness does not suit King Philip, who is fond of bearing the sceptre with a high hand. Heresy is now running a swift course throughout the low provinces; and if it be not arrested in time, will snatch the rod out of the hand of the Spaniard."

"Say they not that the Prince of Orange favours the new opinions?" said the Knight.

"Ay; and Egmont too, the conqueror of St. Quintins," replied Stanley, "as valiant a fellow as ever buckled corslet on his back, is now become a political squabbler, and uses his tongue instead of his sword. In place of commanding an army of gallant soldiers, he chooses to wheedle the lousy mob, and trick the people out of their sweet suffrages by soft and honied words. He and his fellows would form a party against the

Spanish power, and when time arrives, throw up their allegiance."

"And right well will they do, by my faith!" cried Sir George, "if they can but hold their course. I know not any man of a free and brave spirit that would be content to live under a government whose iron power is felt keenly, but whose golden countenance is reserved for a more powerful and distant nation; beside, the sour face of Philip himself is enough to turn the hearts of his subjects. If Queen Mary had lived another year, her husband would have been fairly kicked out of England. I saw him when he first came into this country, and i'faith he looked more stiff and starched than thou drest in that suit."

"Nay, if ye cannot keep wide of that subject, I'll bid ye good night," said Edward Stanley, rising; "where's your chamberlain?"

"Nay, thou shalt not quit so soon," cried the Knight, endeavouring to lay hold upon Stanley's doublet, but he kept at a distance; "we have not finished

our wine — we have not fixed our embassage. I have to ask thee a thousand questions about Mog, my daughter. How dost like her, lad? She is my favourite, and Tom Stanley's favourite; — a right dainty and merry wench: nay, take thy seat again, and I will tell thee."

"If thou hast so much to ask and to tell," said Stanley, drawing off, "thou hadst better begin in the daylight; it would hold until mid-day to-morrow, if ye were to begin now."

"Devil!" cried the Knight; "sit thee down and listen: I will have thee listen now if the story last until Michaelmas."

"Indeed thou wilt not, Sir King of the Peak," replied Stanley, laying his hand upon the latch of the door. "I am at home in all quarters, and shall suit mine own pleasure: so good night to ye."

"False knave! why dost thou not stay him?" bawled Sir George to the Doctor. "Rise, villain! and bring him back."

"Most diligently would I execute

your mandate, honourable Knight," cried the Doctor with a countenance lengthened by fear; "but the gentleman is armed, and a soldier to the boot."

"And if he be twenty times armed, and twenty times a soldier, — or if he be a fiend, a damned devouring devil, gaping for thy blood,—I bid thee seize him; and do so, or I will slay him and thee."

The Knight, whose senses were overcome by the agitated fumes of the wine, rose from his seat; and staggering towards a corner, seized a heavy broad sword, which he drew from the sheath, and, brandishing it with violent fury, made it flash dreadfully in the eyes of the Doctor, and forced him to wink with terror. In the meantime, Edward Stanley stood outside of the door, laughing heartily at the distress of the chirurgeon; who, after bowing his body several times to avoid the sweep of the Knight's weapon, sank beneath the table, and ensconced himself under its ample leaves. Sir George made several attempts to stoop, and drive the Doctor from his retreat; but found he could not abandon

his erect position, without being in danger of a total overthrow, and he was therefore obliged to raise the siege. Foiled in his attack upon the Doctor, he turned his forces once more upon Stanley; who, beholding with great enjoyment the Knight's awkward attempts to gain the door, closed it in his face as he reached the threshold, and barred it upon him. This manœuvre raised Sir George's passion to the highest pitch, and he stormed and swore with dreadful vehemence: but finding that his threats and oaths produced no effect upon Stanley, he caught hold of a bell, and rang it furiously; whilst his tormentor walked calmly off amid the tempest he had excited, and, calling for the chamberlain, retired to rest. Sir George was soon liberated from his confinement, and conveyed by the servants to bed, the unfortunate Doctor taking care to see him clear off before he ventured to stir from his sanctuary.

On the following morning, at a late hour, Edward Stanley was awoke by his own servant Ridgway, who informed

him that Sir Simon Degge's retainer, Septimus, being well acquainted with the country, had brought his master and himself thither; having crossed the Wye above Bakewell, and taken the road through Chatsworth Park, and by the wood, to Haddon.

"Hast thou heard any tidings of Havock?" said Stanley, (meaning his courser) "or was he drowned outright?"

"His body lies on the shore," replied Ridgway, "swelled like a bladder: we have taken the harness from him, and brought it into the house."

"See the carcase buried out of my sight," said the Soldier. "Is the Knight of Haddon stirring?"

"No," replied Ridgway; "the house-steward says he will not rise until mid-day: it's his custom when he's drunk overmuch o' nights."

Stanley smiled, and rising from the bed, chose a suit from the mail which Ridgway had brought with him. Though fond of fine clothes, he had not that patience in the proper adjustment of his apparel, and in the decoration of his

person, which distinguishes the finished fop; but, in accordance with his hot and impetuous temper, hurried over his dressing, and would not allow Ridgway to do that which he himself neglected. His habit, therefore, though elegant, had a look of haste and carelessness about it, which discovered to those unacquainted with him a slight shadow of his character. About his weapons alone was he curious: the sword and dagger which he had worn on the preceding day, and which were somewhat rusted, he gave into the hands of Ridgway, and charged him to be careful in reburnishing them. They were weapons of service, and esteemed by him because they had been the instruments of his glory in many a hot conflict. Those which he selected to supply their places were of a slighter, and perhaps more elegant fabrication; but they were not so trusty, nor so well fitted to his hand.

"I must be beholden to Sir George for a horse," said Stanley, "until I can get another from Lathom or Knowsley. See thou about it."

"The horse I rode is of good speed," replied Ridgway: "he's a better-bred horse than any in the Knight's stables. His grandsire was old Turcoman, my lord had from King Harry: your honour will like him, or I'm wit-shotten."

"Then look out for some stout nag for thyself," said Stanley; "we must make a shift until we return. Where is Degge!"

"In the hall," replied Ridgway, "making his breakfast for the second time."

Descending to the hall, he found the Knight, Sir Simon, hanging over a venison pie of large dimensions, with such ungovernable avidity, that he seemed indisposed to part with the dish, even while he ate from his own platter, lest some glutton as greedy as himself should carry it off: one arm did in fact encircle it, whilst he used his knife with the other; and Edward Stanley, after watching his operations from the staircase passage, drew his dagger, and, approaching silently, pricked him sharply in that hand which he had disposed as a guard to the pastry. The Knight, dash-

ing aside his knife, sprang from his seat, and roared lustily; whilst the Soldier, without noticing his deportment, calmly took his seat, and helped himself to the pasty which his arms had conquered.

"This pasty is mine by right of conquest," said Stanley; "I have dislodged the enemy, and may now safely occupy his post. But I am a merciful conqueror, Sir Simon, and I shall be content to share my spoil with the vanquished foe; so sit thee down — I wot there is plenty for thee and me."

"If this be courtesy, Master Edward Stanley," cried Sir Simon, in great displeasure, "I know not what to call violence."

"It is not courtesy," answered Stanley, eagerly devouring the victuals.

"And it seems to me," continued the Knight, "that without a great stretch of the truth, I may say it is no manifestation of friendship to insult and injure one's companion under the shade of another's roof."

"Simon Degge," said Stanley, turning

round, "it is because we are abroad that I treat thee without ceremony."

"I'faith, when you were at home I had experience of little!" exclaimed the Knight. "If thou doest use me with less observance, and play thy wit upon me with greater licence here than thou didst at Lathom, I am like to have a sorry time of it."

"Curse upon thy long dismal visage!" cried the Soldier, sticking his knife into the pie with great violence; "if it should spoil my breakfast, or turn this good ale sour, I will set upon thee in serious mood. Wilt thou join me or no?"

"Yea; so thou wilt be gentle and courteous, I care not if I do," replied Sir Simon.

"Gentle and courteous!" cried Stanley, with a sneer; "I have played the courtier with thee yet — thou hast to see the minion of the camp in his full lustre: last night's adventure might show thee a shadow of his spirit."

"Heaven defend me from the substance, if such a wild work be the shadow!" exclaimed Sir Simon.

"Pish, man! 'twas a jest—a mere piece of japery," cried Stanley. "I tell thee I have waded over an arm of the sea, at the head of a brigade of true spirits, where the water for five miles was up to our necks. We were ordered to attack a fortress, and the foe opened upon us with as fine a volley as ever was thundered out of a hundred pieces of ordnance. If thou hadst heard the deafening roar, and the infernal hissing and splashing as the shot ducked under the water, thou wouldst have held that night in memory for many a day."

"Nay, marry," answered the Knight, with a hollow voice; "for fear would soon have sunk my head below the waves, and I should have risen no more. But prithee do not now relate thine exploits, if thou wouldst have me partake of Sir George's hospitality."

"Thou wouldst be none the worse for fasting," returned Stanley; "thou hast broken thy fast I'll be sworn before now."

"Nay, i'faith, not with so much as an ousel might carry in his bill," answered

the Knight. "I but tasted of a baron before we left Bakewell. I hold it unsafe to ride on a hollow stomach; and here comes Master Probus, who will give confirmation to mine opinion."

With a pale countenance and sunken eye, the Doctor entered the hall, and, "louting very low," made his obeisance to the Knight and Edward Stanley. The latter invited him to join in their repast, a request with which he did not hesitate to comply.

"We were debating," said Stanley, "whether it be wholesome, Master Doctor, to take two breakfasts, and we were about putting it to your arbitrament."

"Nay, o' my conscience, that was not the question," cried Sir Simon, interrupting Stanley; "it was, whether it be not unsafe for a man to take equestrian exercise upon an empty stomach?"

"Very unsafe — very, indeed," answered Probus, with professional gravity. "The Roman satyrist, a man plainly familiarized with the physical properties of mankind, says '*Vivendi recte qui prorogat horam,*' which is to say —"

"Tush, man!" exclaimed the Knight, with great contempt; "the body was not meant by Horace's aphorism, but the soul."

"Pardon me," replied the Doctor calmly; "the resolution of that sentence is much controverted among the most learned of the commentators. When I studied at Leyden, it was doubted —"

"Doubted!" exclaimed the Knight, with unaccustomed anger; "there can be no doubt: the sense is as clear as a mountain stream; but —"

"Now for the aposiopésis," said the Doctor, with a face of mock expectation.

"Now for the fiend!" cried the indignant Knight. "Thou a scholar!—a mighty poor one, o' my faith; thou art indeed to be reckoned among

> "Ambubaiarum collegia, pharmacopolæ
> "Mendici, mimæ, balatrones."

"So ho, Knight, so ho!" cried Stanley, staring at Sir Simon; "this is *sans façon* with a vengeance."

"And if thou be'st no abler a doctor," continued the Knight, "than thou art a classic, I would not take physic from thee,

though it were in the shape of a cup of aqua anthemidis."

"Cur me querelis, exanimas tuis?" cried Probus, with a declamatory air; "wherefore dost thou stifle me with thy reproaches? I should be casting my pearls to the swine, were I to offer physic to such a snap-dragon as your worship. But on the very sentence in dispute, I have heard our prælector at Leyden, a man omni genere doctrinæ excultus, aver."

"Let his dull hypothesis rest," cried the Knight, "inglorios et ignobiles, ut ait Tacitus, oblivio obruet; and your prælector was, I'll be sworn, of this base genus. I have conversed with some of your German professors in my time; and though they had a world of presumption and dogmatism, their heads were like the nether millstone: thou hast caught the mystery of their wit, and canst very like stagger about an argument for a month, without bringing the bear to the stake."

"Then if I were the Doctor," cried Stanley, "I would bring the stake to the bear, and bait him until he flourished his

shaggy paws, and danced quaintly to the tune of the pioneer's call. —

"We have heard the loud roll of the drum and the fife,
"We have broken the love-pledge, and widow'd the wife;
"The gallant soldado, in heat and in cold,
"Has beaten the foe, and has gather'd the gold:
"Drummers, beat 'cuckolds come dig.'"

Doctor Probus could not refrain from grinning at this effusion; but Sir Simon Degge still preserved his austerity, and even expressed his disapprobation of the Soldier's jocularity by a sour shake of the head. This affectation of spiritual sobriety did not fail to excite the ridicule of his companions, who laughed him to scorn; but he only muttered to himself, "Imo, inter stultos," and rose from his seat to leave the table.

"Your worship is not leaving us," said Probus, peeping into a flaggon which stood half full of strong ale upon the board.

"Yea, marry, I am satisfied of your companionship," replied the Knight, retorting their contempt. "I took Master Stanley here for a soldier and a gentleman; I find him a fierce and reckless —"

"What!" said the Soldier, staring him in the face.

"Nay, I am a magistrate, Sir, and I will not be bullied," returned the Knight; "I have found ye to be destitute of faith and sincerity in all your dealings with me. I pretend not to speak to your commerce with others. You are beside over sharp with your weapons; and if a peaceable man ride in your company, he should be followed by a score armed men to help him out of the scrapes you are sure to plunge him into. You could not go quietly into the woodman's cottage last night, nor rest in peace when ye had possession, but you must try the strength of father and son for very sport and wantonness."

"Thou poltroon!" cried Stanley.

"And then you are as lecherous as a sparrow," continued the Knight. "I'faith, I durst scarce open my mouth to that pretty wench, but thine impudence carried thee straight to her lips without let or hesitation."

"Why, the fiend must have bitten her," cried Stanley, "if she would have had

aught to say to such an ancient scarecrow, such a sheepish and thrifty niggard, as thou art."

"Let her use her wit and her will," answered the Knight, with sulky triumph that he had saved his pocket; "I have a better use for my money and my golden buckles, Master Edward Stanley, than to chuck them into a wanton's lap — ay, marry have I. But pass that: — Master Probus here, whom at first I fancied a grave and learned physician, an oracle in the ars medicinalis, proves to be a quack both in physic and science — an impudent and ignorant empyric —"

"And pass that, your worship," said the Doctor, interrupting the Knight's invective; "may I crave leave to know whether your worship intends to ingurgitate your share of this flaggon of ale?"

"Not I, i'faith," answered Sir Simon; "I have drank as much as it listed me."

"Ho, Master Steward!" exclaimed the Doctor; and that officer instantly appeared. "Is it not your custom when a man leaves any of his liquor, to affix his hand

to that manacle in the wall, and pour it down his sleeve?"

"Ay, marry," replied the ancient domestic, "it is an ancient custom in this house, and Sir George will have it righteously observed."

"Then you may begin with this Knight," said Stanley, laying hold upon him; "for he refuses us his assistance to finish the flaggon, though he called for't himself."

"Nay, I will drink till I burst," cried the Knight, "sooner than spoil my doublet."

And he sat down again to his potation, with the air of a man forced to swallow poison.

CHAP. VII.

"Tricks upon travellers, saith our ancient proverb;
But spite of proverbs and of apophthegms,
Those musty monuments of dead men's vanity,
I've known ere now your tricking beget travail."

THE QUEEN'S COURTIER.

THE boon companions had not finished their morning meal, when their host, rising earlier than was his custom, after so protracted a debauch as he had been a party to the preceding evening, appeared at one side of a gallery, which ran round three sides of the hall. He winked slily at Edward Stanley, who descried him, and taking a round buckler from the antlers of one of a number of stags' heads that were affixed at regular intervals to the cornice of the gallery, he leaned over and dropped it perpendicularly upon the bare pate of Sir Simon Degge. Though not of any great weight, the suddenness of the blow quite overset him, and he fell backwards from

the bench on which he had been sitting to the ground. Sir George instantly retired, so as to avoid being observed by Sir Simon, who lay without attempting to move, casting a doleful look at the instrument which had effected his prostration. Edward Stanley, jumping up from table, reeled around the hall with laughter; whilst Probus now extended his jaws to their widest limit, and then checking himself, plumbed up his mouth until it was no bigger than a button. At this moment, the Knight of Haddon, with a face wherein the gravity which he assumed was rudely jostled by his desire to laugh, entered the hall from the staircase; and affecting to be surprised at the situation of his unfortunate guest, bawled out in his usual manner, "Why, Simon Degge! hast not been abed? By the rood, thou must be fain of sleep, man, or thou wouldst not choose a flagged floor for thy bedstead. He beats you soldiers, Ned, to nothing."

"Ha, ho!" cried Degge, without stirring.

"Ha, ho!" echoed Sir George; "art in a fit, man? Probus, why the devil dost not bestir? Get some water, knave! and throw in his face. — What's in your flaggon?"

Edward Stanley, without waiting for a further hint, seized the flaggon; and before the Knight could expostulate, saved him from the manacle by throwing its contents over him. The Knight instantly leaped from the ground with the agility of an antelope, and setting his hands to his sides, roared out, "Murther!" with all the might his lungs could exert.

"Why the fiend dost call 'murther!'" exclaimed Sir George; "are we not aiding thee in thine infirmity?"

"Oh, ye are mere devils!" exclaimed the Knight; "I will fly the house forthwith. — Septimus, varlet! get out my horse. Oh! ye are imps of Belzebub! wild fiends, servants of the arch traitor! Septimus, ho! Bring Hobby to the gate. — Mercy o'me! my lace ruff, that cost ten rials, is clean spoiled, — it will never take the yellow starch again. Fool

that I was, to hazard it in company with this mandrake! Septimus — paugh! I smell like a beer barrel."

"Ay, thou dost stink villanously," cried Sir George; "but it seems, then, thou wert not in a fit: thou didst prefer the bare pavement to a wooden bench. I wot it was to show thy hardihood —"

"Hardihood! a louse!" cried Sir Simon, shaking the moisture from his clothes. "I was stricken to the ground by somewhat that fell from the gallery — there, that pot-cover."

"Pot-cover!" said Sir George, with unaffected gravity. "Know ye not a target of war from a pot-cover, man? That pot-cover, as thou callest it, has borne more shrewd blows than any man of thy race. It has shielded many as brave hearts as ever beat thick at the closing of battle. Pot-cover, forsooth! Damned be thy apprehension, for so base a fancy!"

"Pot-cover or target, clypeus, scutum aut parma!" exclaimed the Knight, rubbing his head; "it hath nearly knocked out my brains."

"It would have been well," cried Stanley, "if it had beaten the maggots out of thy skull."

"Peace, thou interminate pest!" exclaimed the indignant Scholar, with more than usual courage; "I would not remain where thou art for another week——"

"To be free of expense at bed and board," said Stanley, piecing out the sentence.

"Septimus, varlet! where's my horse?" cried Sir Simon. "I will depart forthwith."

"Nay, thou wilt not," answered Sir George, "unless Hobby can leap the portal. Thou mayst try his mettle."

"Ye will not hold me prisoner," said Degge.

"Ay, but I will; I am lord and lawgiver in the Peak," cried the Knight of Haddon, "and thou shalt do as I will have thee; so leave thine infernal strut, and hark to the reclaim, man."

Sir Simon knew the humour of his irascible host too well to tempt him further; but he was still full of vexation, and

indisposed to make any concession. He seated himself upon the bench at a considerable distance from the rest, and with a primmed and demure countenance, began in silence to number his fingers; but Stanley had no mind that he should yet escape, and fixed his eyes upon him with the eager gaze of a panther about to spring upon his prey. In the mean time, Sir George ordered the flaggon to be replenished, and in his turn attacked the venison pasty, which mightily decreased under the repeated charges of these valiant cavaliers.

The Doctor, who had not yet finished his meal, seemed to vie with his patron in the depth of his draught; and huge masses of the pasty disappeared from his platter, with a celerity truly astonishing. But it would require the pen and the wit of Homer himself, to do justice to this theme; and we must, therefore, leave it to our readers to supply, out of the vivacity of their own fancies, those more minute and exquisite beauties of the picture which we acknowledge our

humour and science are too scanty to pourtray.

When each man had made an end of his breakfast, the Knight of Haddon conducted his guests, by a private door, from his own sitting-room into the garden; which, after the mode of that age, was arranged in two terraces, separated from each other by a balustrade of stone: the lower garden was on an equality with the ground-plot of the mansion; but the upper, raised about two yards, was ascended by a noble flight of steps. Instead of that beautiful irregularity, that elegant taste in the disposition of shrubs and flowers, which, while preserving the variety of nature, display the perfection of art; that alternation of floral hues, which strikes the beholder like the mellow tints of a finished picture; — in the gardens of Haddon, nothing was to be seen but straight avenues, planted on either side with the gloomy cypress, or the sepulchral yew. Beneath the windows were many kinds of rose-trees, protected from the walks by thick borders of box, and which were intended to

regale the inhabitants with their odour, after the fall of genial showers. At one extremity of the upper garden was an arbour, dark as the shade of the Sybil, in which the Lady Dorothy was fond of pursuing her learned lucubrations; and at the higher end, opposite to a staircase, proceeding from one of the state chambers, was an ascent, by a double flight of steps, into a spacious avenue above the upper garden, which, planted on both sides with trees of vast altitude, was kept warm, and yet shaded by their embowering foliage. This avenue was called Dorothy Vernon's Labyrinth (a name which it still retains), from the fondness which that young lady showed for this favourite spot; and no place could have been better chosen for literary contemplation. Calm, and sequestered from the haunts of men, shaded from the fierce glare of the sun, and distant so far from the river, that a gentle murmur could alone be heard while its silver waves glanced through the wood,— its silence, its shade, and the soothing hum of the water, were

as favourable to the love of study as the groves of Academus. Here for hours, and it is said for days together, the meditative mind of the beautiful Dorothy beguiled itself in the perusal of classic authors, both in modern and ancient literature. In these exercises she had been eminently assisted by the Father John Vernon, a regular ecclesiastic of the Romish church, who officiated at Haddon as private chaplain; a man of brilliant talents and profound learning, whose sole desire was the acquisition of knowledge and the instruction of his beautiful pupil. He was frequently the companion of her walks, and always stole away from the coarse revelry of the Knight, to join in the conversation and the speculations of his daughter. Being a distant kinsman of Sir George, he was allowed a much greater latitude of discretion, than any other retainer of the house; and to his honest opinion, the stubborn spirit of his patron would sometimes bend, if its direction had not been fixed unalterably by the sharp spirit of controversy. The

Knight, too, was attached to him, not only as his spiritual adviser, — a relation, which, in his eyes, obtained no particular respect, — but as a firmly attached friend, and one that was linked to his fortune in the good and evil day. Every one in the castle, therefore, was eager to pay the Chaplain attention ; and so much was his character esteemed by the elderly portion of the domestics, that he was served with more zeal through affection, than he would have been through their lord's commands. And by no person was the holy father held in more unfeigned esteem, and more distinguished regard, than by the wild and laughter-loving Margaret Vernon ; who, partaking of her father's boisterous humour, shared also in his warm and kindly feelings. Though accustomed to make sport of the Priest's learned abstractions, and to satirize, with great liberality, the studious *penchant* of her sister, whom she could seldom induce to join her in the pleasures of the field, she was really charmed with the mild and apostolic spirit of Father John, and looked up to

her sister as a being, whose instructed mind raised her above mortality, in its more gross and sensual gratifications; — as enjoying a placidity, an amenity and Christianity of spirit, which argued a much more intimate acquaintance with the blessings of a future existence, than with the corporeal joys of this world.

The Knight of Haddon, leading the way through the lower garden, conducted his friends up the flight of steps we have mentioned into the upper terrace, whence there was a fine view of the valley beneath the house, with the sparkling Wye, whose waters were now somewhat reduced, flowing majestically through the midst; and the bold hills, which composed part of Haddon Park, rising from the water to the edge of the horizon. Large herds of deer were seen bounding with playful emulation over the lea, or surveying their hairy visages in the water; whilst droves of cattle of more sober habits pastured quietly together, beneath the broad shadows of the aged and giant trees, or on the banks of the river. The aspect of the country was essentially changed

since the preceding evening: all traits of the storm had vanished; and the sun, bursting forth in the midst of an unclouded sky, resembled the blaze of a diamond order suspended over the breast of a coat of mail. It filled the heavens with its effulgence, and intermingled with the soft and sober blue its own gorgeous and dazzling splendour. But our *dramatis personæ* now on the scene were not men of a spirit sufficiently pure or romantic, to be particularly delighted with the beauties of nature: each of them had his own thoughts of the matter; but neither of them was possessed of one touch of that thrilling gratitude to the Creator, which good and susceptible men feel on beholding the face of the morning smile.

"The day is good for fishing," said Doctor Probus.

"But better, I wot, for getting in your hay," said the Knight of Bowdon; "trout will not bite after rain."

"Ye may tickle them well enough," said the Doctor.

"I do not love your groping of trout,"

responded Sir Simon; "ye may chance to get some vermin about your fingers that ye may not soon be quit of. I once thought I had got hold of a fish, and, lo! when I whisked him out, I had got my thumb under the fore-leg of an asker; — beshrew the imp! it makes my blood run cold to think on't."

"What think ye of having some cooled wine under the shade?" said Sir George; "would it not be better than frying one's carcase under such a flame as this? What sayst thou, Ned? Simon Degge, thou wouldst look like a king, sitting at thine ease under a tree."

"Ay, *sub arcta vite bibentem!*" exclaimed the Knight. "But it is too soon to begin quaffing these ten hours."

"It is never too soon for good fellowship, thou drone!" cried Sir George; "but as ye will, — jewel your noses after your own fashion."

"I would join ye with good will at a flagon of wine," said Stanley; "but remember we have other shot to shoot. Probus may recollect, if you do not, our last night's conference."

"Eh, ho! yea," replied the Doctor, rather gravely.

"Hollo, hollo!" cried Stanley, "I see a petticoat."

"Where?" cried the Knight of Haddon.

"In yon arbour," replied Stanley; "and a cavalier to boot."

"Pish o' thy cavaliers!" returned Sir George; "it is Doll and her old tutor at their Latin and Greek. Have ye not seen her?"

"Not I, i'faith," answered the Knight of Bowdon.

"Nor I," said Stanley.

"The wench is distraught with her books," cried Sir George, angrily. "Why, prithee Doll! Dorothy Vernon! come hither."

The Knight approached the arbour followed by his companions, exerting his voice by the way, which could scarce have failed to penetrate the depths of Avernus. The lady and Father John, who were seated at a table on which lay a number of books, rose up and came forward to meet them: the former with an air of timid reserve and anxious modesty,

which seemed to think the post of female honour was not in the circles of men; and the latter with a mild benignity and propriety of manner, which bespoke a kind and affectionate disposition. The Priest, for an aged man, was by no means deficient in bodily vigour: he was of small stature and thin frame; but his limbs were free and pliable, and his eye occasionally beamed with animation. Cheerfulness seemed to have been at one time, perhaps in his youth, his characteristic, but it was now sobered down into a gentle passiveness, which better befitted his age; at times, however, sparkling out in a rich vein of blythe humour, which showed he had not always been grave. He saluted Sir George and his guests with great complacency, offering his hand to Sir Simon Degge as an old acquaintance. The Knight of Haddon led his daughter to Stanley, and said, "This is the petticoat thou did'st espy, Ned Stanley; my daughter, Dorothy Vernon. Thou hast not seen her since thou wert a tutored urchin."

"And I would again be under the

yoke of a pedagogue," said the Soldier, saluting the damsel, "if I might share my studies in such a fellowship."

"Studies!" exclaimed the Knight; "if ye were together for half an hour, ye would be studying how to rid yourselves of Sir John, here. How sayst thou, Father?"

"I might answer for my pupil's discretion," replied the Priest.

"So would not I," cried her father; "and much less when she is elbowed by this hot gallant. Edward Stanley is a mere devil in the affairs of love."

"A mere devil!" echoed Sir Simon.

"What sayst thou?" retorted Stanley to the Knight of Bowdon. "Thou hast need to fling thy charges at my head, who hast been making love to the Lady Margaret with all thy might."

"What? how?" said Sir George; "Degge making love to Meg Vernon! ha, ha! — I would my grandmother were alive. But how did she receive thee, Simon? — ha, ha, ha!"

"Nay, 'tis no jest, on my honour," said Stanley, with a serious countenance

" he laid himself out in heroic measure; and actually composed a sonnet of complaint to his mistress."

" An owl to the moon!" cried Sir George.

" Ha! marry," cried Sir Simon, in the uttermost vexation at his exposure, " well did Sir George say but now thou wert a mere devil, Master Stanley; for such I will prove thee before this honourable company, to thy utter shame and confusion. I will not be the sole target whereon they shall exercise their wit. I say thou art like the serpent which did beguile our first parents; and worse than that old serpent, for thou dost expose thy victims after thou hast betrayed them. I ask thee, here, didst not thou trick me into a belief that the maid was to be won, and even regarded me with a tender complacency?"

Here Sir George and Stanley burst into a peal of laughter, whilst Probus extended his jaws behind the back of the orator, and Father John smiled gently at this absurd accusation. Dorothy Vernon blushed, and retiring to the arbour, took up a book.

"Well, how went ye on with your tender complacency?" said Sir George.

"You see he cannot contravene that I have delivered," said Sir Simon, triumphantly. "It was a base design to expose me to ridicule, knowing the desire I had to become son-in-law to so noble a personage as your worship."

"Son-in-law! ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed Sir George. "I'faith 'tis well for Meg she was engaged; thou wouldst have killed her with thy ardour."

"And yet," said Sir Simon, "this double-tongued gentleman at last turned about upon me, and said I know not what about my age, and the lady's hurrying me to death. Was it not uncivil?—think ye not it was?"

"Mighty uncivil," replied Sir George. "But I trust Meg treated thee with more ceremony."

"The Lady Margaret Vernon," said Sir Simon, "used me with every gentleness and propriety. I have nought to complain of her carriage."

"And yet as we rode along," said Stanley, "thou wert contrasting the mild

courtesy of this fair maiden with the hot and vixen spirit of her sister."

"Nay, marry," cried the Knight.

"What, sir!" said Stanley, interrupting him with a cool and serious countenance, "will ye eat your words, and give me the lie? Mind ye, we are now on neutral ground."

"I am not to be affrighted, Master Edward Stanley," replied the Knight, with an aspect which belied his words. "If you draw weapon on me, I'll commit ye to gaol. Not but I did say the Lady Dorothy Vernon was of a sweeter temper than her sister. I said so, I confess it."

"Have a care, Sir George," cried Stanley, "have a care of your daughter. Look to your bolts and bars."

"Nay, what I do," said Sir Simon, "I do in the face of the world; let all people do the like, — no disparagement to any body here. But what I said I will say again,—the Lady Margaret hath a keen and biting wit, a full flow of irrepressible humour, not the better that it is somewhat mischievous. This kind of wit, as

saith an author I have read, is like a two-edged sword; it cuts backward and forward, right hand and left, and doth as frequently annoy friends as enemies. But what can be more pleasant and acceptable than the sober fancy of the Lady Dorothy, which doubtless she hath perfected by the contemplation of all that is excellent in letters? She hath learnt her carriage in the intellectual world,—a world every way superior to this corporeal one, and peculiarly fitted for the chastisement of that animal effervescence to which most ladies are subject."

"Right fairly spoken," said Sir George; "why do ye not set up for a lecturer on female manners? Thy philosophy in this age, I'll be sworn, would draw converts to thy heels."

"Itinerant philosophy hath been out of respect," said Sir Simon, "since the days of Apollonius; else had I been another man this day. But all men could not have the good fortune of being cotemporaries and countrymen of Plato and Aristotle; let us, therefore, be content with our lot."

"Are we not enjoying a brighter day," said the Priest, with a calm tone but kindling eye, "than did those half-enlightened men? True it is, they attained a perfection in philosophy and science so far as the unassisted intellect of man could exert itself; but it was not until the clouds which darkened the theological world were dispersed, and the true Deity had revealed himself, that philosophy took its proper range, that it was brought to a definite bearing, and was applied to a use fitted for so lofty a pursuit. What were the academics to that Christian philosopher who declared they were too superstitious, and worshipped a God whom they knew not? They were as the moth or the painted butterfly, that do flutter their gaudy hour, and are dead for ever; whilst Paul and his brethren, like the industrious bee, did lay up for themselves a lasting treasure."

"Paul was an eloquent man," said Sir Simon, thinking he was obliged to say something; "a learned linguist, a famed rhetorician."

"He knew better things than languages and rhetoric," said the Priest; "he was a true servant of his Master, perfectly skilled in the science of religion, a light to the feet of the blind, and a lamp to the path of those that were in darkness."

"If you will be counselled by me, Sir Knight," said Edward Stanley to Sir George Vernon, interrupting this theological contention, for which he had no relish, "you will prepare to receive Sir Simon's avowal of love for the fair Dorothy. It is not merely to display his own learning and rhetoric, I fancy, that he has covered the maiden with such praise, and thrown us into admiration. I well know, by the adventure wherein he hath accused me, that his fluency increases with his love."

"Nay, if the Knight be so minded," replied Sir George, "let him but give me some note of his purpose, and I will call together my friends and kindred to receive his proffer, as doth become his quality. I doubt not the wench will be no stickler."

"Most worthy Knight," said Sir Simon, with a smile of obliged gratification, "if it be agreeable to yourself and fair Dorothy that I enter upon my terms of wooing, I pray ye let us have no ceremony. I can easily dispense with the pomp of your kinsmen's acceptance, recorded in full assembly, if I am honoured with that of the fair maid herself."

"But I see not how she can trust thee," said Stanley; "thou art the mere devil in love matters thou wouldst have had me esteemed. At Lathom thou dost sigh and groan, compose sonnets, and make love to one sister; and at Haddon, where even thy gallantry is notorious, thou dost begin the like game with the other. If this be not the crown of impudence, I will never back horse again."

"Ay, what sayst thou to this?" said Sir George, with affected gravity: "perchance, when thou hast won Doll's heart, thou wilt veer about to some other quarter."

"He has other fish on the hook at this moment," continued Stanley; "for last

night in the storm we took shelter at the cabin of a woodman; one Onshaw, or Ollerenshaw —"

"Ay, a rough-hewn dog is that," said Sir George.

"Rough enough," replied Stanley; "but he hath as pretty a bit of painted flesh for a daughter as ever a man looked upon, and our Knight's chops began to water before he had been in the house two minutes."

"Yea, but I did not kiss her and squeeze her as thou didst, Master Edward Stanley," answered Sir Simon; "mark that."

"Ha, ha! thou'rt a keen rogue, Ned," cried Sir George, laughing heartily, while the Chaplain walked to the arbour, and resumed his studies.

"But didst thou not propose thyself as a pupil to her," said Stanley, "and she rejected thee on the score of thine antiquity?"

"That was in my jesting mood," replied the Knight of Bowdon; "nothing more, as I'm a man of my word. Beside, they say she's the property of that famous

outlaw who hath stolen so many of your worship's deer."

"Ha! that knave hath hitherto foiled the search of our keepers," said the Knight. "It is said he doth aim at somewhat higher than woodman's daughter or deer; but the gallant shall learn he is no free ranger in my park. I have been told —"

He stopped short, and cast a glance in which anger was subdued by confidence, upon his daughter, who sat deeply absorbed in the old French romance of the Rose, and wholly inattentive to their conversation.

"And think ye," said Sir Simon, "that for the smile of a rustic gill-flirt, I would peril my body against such a fierce and stalwart renegado; a fellow whose breadth of shoulders, and nerves and muscles would serve for Hercules' counterpart? No, i'faith, not I, — it is only for such Dreadnoughts as Master Stanley, who loves fighting for the sake of it, to run their heads into danger on slight occasion."

"Then ye have seen this Outlaw?" said Sir George.

"Seen him! ay, marry, and Master Stanley hath felt him withal," cried Sir Simon. "Upon some familiarity, mark ye, which our spark here took with the pretty Rose, her brother spoke his mind over freely for Master Stanley's high blood to brook; one word tumbled over the heels of another, and at length a blow was given, and swords drawn. The woodman was soon in a way for tasting Master Stanley's steel, when this outlaw, who was present, seized upon his arm, and withheld his revenge. It was right well he did so, or the rustic's blood would have stained your conscience, Sir Cavalier."

Stanley turned up his lip, and with great earnestness said, "This fellow is not what he seems,—but I have claimed his courtesy for my reparation, and he will grant it: I would therefore have ye recall your orders regarding his seizure, and trust to my sword, for doing you justice wherein you have been wronged."

"I said not I was wronged," re-

turned Sir George, with unwonted dignity. "If I fancied my honour had received injury, I am not so old but my own arm could have righted me."

"But you will not withdraw this man from my revenge?" said Stanley. "He has dared to interpose between my sword and another's life; he then took the danger on himself."

"As regards yourself, you shall guide me," replied Sir George; "he shall be at liberty, while you remain at Haddon: I will so order it. But I would have ye sure that this Outlaw is no churl, before thou dost mate thy chivalrous blood with his. If thou dost vanquish him, where's the honour? If he conquers thee, thy disgrace is eternal."

"I never thought to have heard this apology for cowards, uttered by so valiant a Knight as the Vernon," said Stanley; "it is the very trash and shield of the fearful of heart.—No, Sir, he that opposes me, be he prince or beggar, if he can fight, shall do me justice, evenhanded, foot to foot, and point to point. Beshrew your honourable distinctions, they let my

revenge. Man is but flesh and blood, and that of the churl will bide the stab as well as the gentleman. Let him vanquish me if he can. I never laid hand upon weapon but with the full assurance of conquest."

"And I durst never lay hand upon weapon," said Sir Simon, "because I had the fullest assurance of being conquered. Next to courage, if not before, discretion, I fancy, is the greatest virtue; and that I never lacked."

"Cowardice thou dost mean," said Stanley; "thou art as craven-hearted, as lily-livered as a hare; but I will put thee into discipline; thou shalt accompany me when I go to seek this Outlaw, and thou may'st amuse thyself with banging his Squire, the young Woodman, while I am busy with the Knight."

Sir Simon made no reply, but with a lengthened visage walked into the arbour, and took up a book.

CHAP. VIII.

Onward, Villany! check not thy ruffian steps!
Assail thine object with thy keenest practice,
And chuckle when thou think'st she'll fall before thee!
Laugh whilst thou can'st! the hour is not far off,
When, villain, thou shalt learn the scourge thou hast form'd
Was made for thine own back.

THE CURATE OF ROSEBERRY.

THE character of the Lady Dorothy Vernon, mild, timid, and retiring, allowed the assurance of Edward Stanley, for some days, no mode of displaying itself particularly towards her. Modesty, indeed, especially if it be tinctured with timidity, is an insuperable safeguard against the attacks of the libertine: the strength of the female possessed of this adamantine shield, is perfected in her weakness; for she gives her assailant no chance of success, because she affords him no opportunity for action. She is the Fabius of amorous contest, and no Hannibal, however skilful, can force her

into battle until he has demolished the outworks of her reserve. The confident Soldier did not fail to make many attempts to enter into conversation with Dorothy Vernon; but though she replied to his observations with the utmost sweetness, her answers were laconically couched, and never branched out into any colloquial length, so that he found it a painful task to maintain a discourse in which he had to provide all the materials for discussion: and he was the more piqued with the shyness of the Lady Dorothy, insomuch as, though by no means displaying the hilarity of her sister, she evinced the most perfect frankness and confidence both to Father John and Sir Simon Degge, seeming to select him alone from the whole company as an object of suspicion and distrust. This conduct on her part doubtless arose, in some degree, from her intimate knowledge of her tutor and the Knight of Bowdon, and her comparative strangeness to Edward Stanley; but as it was a peculiarity of manner to which

he had not been accustomed, it placed him in an awkward and vexatious situation. There was, moreover, another and more definite cause, of which he was ignorant, why Dorothy Vernon avoided familiarity with him

Sir Simon Degge, on the evening before they quitted Lathom, had been privily entrusted with letters from the Lady Margaret Vernon to her sister, which, in a few lines, displayed more of the character of the intended guest at Haddon, than, it is probable, he would himself have disclosed in a month.

Margaret Vernon did not pourtray the whole of his vicious conduct, being fearful her letter might fall into other hands than those for which it was intended; but she said sufficient to put her sister on her guard, and to awaken in her mind a train of fearful suspicions, without which she could never afterwards behold the Soldier. His pride, however, which was greatly alarmed at her caution, and his bold and pertinacious spirit, would not suffer him to abandon that, which he

now considered a chase of honour — a quest, which was to put to full proof those talents of address, that knowledge of intrigue, and that cool and steady perseverance, which he held himself to possess; and which he had ever considered capable of subverting or overpowering all opposition. He therefore changed his manner — dismissed the bullying swagger of the camp, and put on the diffidence and ingenuous candour of a youth unpaced in the roads of life. Refurbishing his memory, he endeavoured to strike out a little of that learning which he had long sacrificed to other pursuits, that he might not appear to intrude upon the lady's studies, but might seem to gratify his literary taste in keeping her company. He attended her also when she rode in the park, which, however, she never did, except in company with her father, her tutor, or Sir Simon Degge; and took an infinity of pains to lessen or overcome her reserve; but her mind had taken its direction — the twig was bent, the tree was inclined, and, at the end of a week, he

saw himself no farther advanced in her confidence than he was on the first moment of their meeting.

The disposition of Dorothy Vernon was not of that character which exactly suited Edward Stanley: it was too soft, too indecisive, and had not that shewy smartness about it, that life and high tone of spirit, which he admired in her sister; and although, in the opinion of most people, she surpassed the Lady Margaret in beauty, yet hers was not the loveliness ever in motion, which fascinates by its variety. Her features, under a timid and sober restraint, seemed ever the same. In public company she never entered, as her sister, into those sallies of mirth or passion, which cause an alternation of light and shadow on the countenance, displaying the lineaments in as many forms as the several feelings which they pourtray; but her fine face at all times exhibited that repose and contemplative sublimity, which we gaze on with breathless awe in the Madonna of Raffaello, and in some of the female forms of Canova, and which are rather calculated to command

respect and admiration, than to inspire tenderness and love. For such a being to throw herself into the stream of mortal passion, and to disturb the serenity of her features by the agitations of common occurrence, would be to destroy the spell which rivets the gaze of the spectator, and to reduce the deity of our imagination into a mould of fellow dust. Whilst the cast of high and undefinable imagination rests upon the countenance, we feel that the spirit which animates the frame is holy and etherial; and we, perhaps, admire it the more, because the objects of that spirit's contemplation cannot be distinctly fathomed; but no sooner does it quit its vantage ground and show itself clothed in mortal passion, than our admiration ceases, our awe is gone, our fascination is determined, and we wonder only by what charm we have been so long enthralled.

Our readers, however, will have observed before, that the mind of Edward Stanley was not of a character likely to be won by beauty of this kind. His soul, fierce and active, was dead to senti-

ment, and could not be kept so still as to catch one glimpse of that imaginative loveliness, for which Dorothy Vernon was chiefly to be admired. Even as he sat by her in her study, or walked with her in the garden, where he had opportunities of marking and digesting every separate feature — of beholding her, when her mind was wrapped in poetical or ethical speculation, and she appeared to be a member of another order of beings, the worldly policy of Stanley was too prevalent in his heart, to allow him the enjoyment of one pure feeling, such as attends the true conception of a face so characterized. He busied himself alone in finding means to circumvent his lovely companion; and, when he seemed to pore with intense ardour upon authors of morality, he was possessed with a devil, which incited him to every manner of mischief. The very repose of Dorothy Vernon's countenance he turned into imbecility, and in his heart despised her understanding, which he deemed would soon fall before his finely-spun policy. As yet, however, he had no definite ob-

ject in view in seeking to win the affections of Dorothy Vernon. He highly preferred the bold and fascinating spirit of Margaret, to the calm serenity of her sister, and at present had no thoughts of giving up his quest of his brother's mistress; but as he had an eye towards bettering his fortunes, he thought it best to have two strings to his bow, that if Margaret Vernon should persist in her aversion to him, he might, at least, secure himself a moiety of the Knight's estate by a marriage with her sister. He was sure of Sir George's consent to his union with Dorothy, an event to which, in fact, her father already looked forward with pleasure, and pushed on with all the encouragement he could afford his friend and colleague in treason. Their community of faith and of political sentiment, as well as the friendly intercourse which had long subsisted between the families of Stanley and Vernon, made it highly desirable to the Knight that they should be incorporated; and Sir George had already laid down a plan, in his own mind, whereby his favourite, Edward Stanley, upon his mar-

riage with Dorothy, should exchange the name and arms of Stanley for those of Vernon, which, from the failure of male heirs, would, as regarded his branch of the family, be otherwise extinct. And, with that grasping ambition, for which the Knight of Haddon was notorious, he entered warmly into the scheme of rebellion, which, in concert with the King of Spain, the desperate Soldier had chalked out.

At the commencement of Elizabeth's reign, it would have been no hard task to have uncrowned her, especially as she did not fulfil the expectations of any religious party, but steered a middle course in ecclesiastical concerns, which was alike disagreeable to all. The Papists reviled her as a bastard and a heretic ; the Calvinists called her the English Pope ; whilst those who professed to be of the moderate party were turncoats from all parties, and at the first blush of rebellion would have thrown away their borrowed cloaks, and joined the uppermost faction. And as it seemed likely that such an event was not remote, — that the papists, aided by the

redoubted veterans of Spain, would gain their purpose; and that, at all events, the Earl of Derby, if he did not attain the crown itself (which was by no means improbable, considering his affinity to the blood-royal, and his great popularity), would at least arrive at the highest rank and power in the state, excepting that of sovereign. The Knight of Haddon, though not much used to calculations of advantage to himself, foresaw, that if he could match both his daughters into the Earl's family, it would be better than marrying them to the heads of other houses less distinguished by rank and popular favour. It was, therefore, with no small gratification that he beheld Edward Stanley apply himself to the task of addressing Dorothy; and though he sometimes stormed heavily at being deprived of the gallant's company, and ridiculed him for his change of manner, yet, on the whole, he bore his privations with heroic philosophy.

Edward Stanley, amid the multiplicity of his designs, did not forget to keep a strict watch over Dorothy Vernon, that

he might, if possible, learn whether any connection did actually subsist between the damsel and the Outlaw, but he had hitherto neither seen nor heard any thing that could raise suspicion. The Outlaw was daily heard of, as being seen in the parks of Haddon and Chatsworth; sometimes near the hall, and sometimes far distant, now on horseback and then a foot; but Stanley could never learn that he came so nigh as to have any converse with his mistress, and almost concluded that the story of their amours was worthy the contempt with which it had been treated by Sir George. He did not, nevertheless, relax his observation, but continued to exercise a careful and incessant vigilance in all things that respected the lady.

In the mean time, a conference had been held between Sir George, Edward Stanley, and Probus, relative to the journey which it had been resolved the latter should make to Flanders, for the purpose of procuring further aid from the Spanish government, as they could have no solid hope of succeeding in their

enterprise, without powerful and prompt assistance; and this assistance, they had no hope of attaining in any other quarter. For although, at this time, the Guises governed France, and they were (as relatives of the Queen of Scotland) sufficiently hostile to Elizabeth to cause her any trouble which their malice could suggest, or their means supply; yet it was fortunate for the Queen of England, that those means were but slender; and, indeed, the French court was too much occupied with the contentions of its own factions, the Catholic and Huguenot, to have either time or military aid to bestow on those of any other kingdom. From any other power than France or Spain (Scotland, where those of the reformed religion were uppermost, being out of the question), the English Catholics could not expect support, unless it were from the spiritual fulminations of the Pope, and this kind of assistance had long since been found of trifling utility. They were, therefore, obliged to anchor their hopes upon the Spanish government, which they knew

had both the power and the disposition to serve them. But time now pressed; every day that passed by and left them inert, fixed Elizabeth more steadfastly on her throne. Her civil government, though resolute in execution, was mild and popular in judgment, and it was feared, that in no great length of time, it would calm the spirit of disaffection, even among the factions of religion. To prevent this composure was now the main object of the conspirators, and after a long consultation, it was resolved, that instead of proceeding direct to Flanders, the Doctor should repair to London, and make his report of the circumstances that had happened to the Bishop of Aquila, Philip's ambassador; that he should lay before him the state of their affairs, and point out to him wherein the assistance of his master would be necessary. Troops, money, and an additional supply of arms were to be demanded, that the thousands of men whom Vernon and Stanley counted upon raising in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, might not remain idle for

lack of furniture. The armament was to be brought round as before, by way of the Irish Channel, into the Mersey, near Liverpool, where these leaders were in assurance of being enabled to meet it with a force, which, assisted by the experience of a few hundreds of veterans, would be superior to any army the Queen could bring into the field. The Earl of Derby was once more to be solicited to take the lead in the rebellion, and if he should again refuse, he was to be placed in honourable durance with the Knight of Haddon, and his name used as the stalking horse of their project. Authorised by these instructions, attended by a servant of his patron's household, and well furnished, that the envoy might not disgrace the embassage, the disciple of Æsculapius quitted Haddon.

Matters were in this state, when one morning that Sir George and the Lady Dorothy, attended by Edward Stanley and Sir Simon Degge, had ridden out into the park with their falcons, the younger Ollerenshaw, and his sister Rose, made their appearance at the gate,

and enquired for Edward Stanley. They were admitted into the hall, and were informed by the steward, Master Giles Winterbottom, of his absence.

"Why, pr'ythee lad," said the reverend domestic, as he chucked Rose under the chin, "is it thee or thy sister that is come to see Master Stanley? What, I warrant now she would be his laundry-maid, or darn his point ruffs, or patch up his silk nether stocks, or any thing in way of an honest livelihood — Eh! Is't not so? By my truly I know — with a little daffing between whiles, ha, ha, ha! Sit ye down; sit ye down; 'fore heaven, it is marvellous hot; and I trow, if I were to bring ye a flaggon of good ale, ye would not throw it in my face, eh?"

"Nay, marry," answered Ollerenshaw; "I know better use to make on't."

"What say'st thou, my pretty blush-rose?" cried Master Winterbottom, pinching the damsel's cheek. "Thou shalt have a small glass of canary out of his worship's cupboard, and a handful of Lady Dorothy's comfits — i'faith thou shalt, wench — they'll do thee

good, after sweating up hill this hot day."

"Thank your honour, Master Winterbottom," replied Rose, with a short curtsey, "but I winna have your wine; I ne'er tasted on it but once, and then I was badly for a full two hours after — but I'll have your comfits, and thank ye too."

"Thou shalt, thou shalt, — and a slice of date pudding," said the steward. "I trow, Anak, thou wouldst not run away from a luncheon of ham pye: I trow thou would'st not."

"Nay," replied Anak, shewing his great butter teeth; "when I come to th' Ha', I come fasting. Nobody goes away from Haddon wi' a lank belly."

The steward smiled, and shaking his head, went to the buttery-hatch, and ordered refreshments for Anak, whilst he himself got the pudding and comfits for Rose. A ham pye, with a thick brown crust, together with bread, butter, cheese, and a flaggon of strong ale, were soon placed before the woodman, who delved into the former without cere-

mony. The steward having procured his refections for the damsel, returned to the Hall, and seating himself beside her, took pleasure in helping her, and watching her eat.

"Well, and how fare ye all at the Woodhead?" said the steward. "How is Gilbert? no more wandering o'nights I hope, Anak! — A bad trade, a bad trade, boy; full of dangers and despites, — marry, he who follows it is on a gain road to the gallows."

"Bi'rlady, I think so, master steward," replied the woodman carelessly; "one had better be shot than shoot, save with licence."

"Right, boy; it is well thou hast the sense to avoid this temptation," said Winterbottom. "I'faith, Gilbert was marked as a black hand, and well may he speak of his worship's grace, which hath not overlooked him narrowly."

"He's a good word for his worship, as well as for yoursel, master steward," returned Anak; "none of our name e'er got aught by the Vernons, save right good-will, and whatever we asked for: I

would draw weapon for his worship, by day or night; — here's his worship's health."

"I'll join thee, lad, with a brimmer," cried the steward, filling out a horn of ale: "I have lived in this house, man and boy, this fifty-five year; and knew his worship when he was no higher than a joint-stool. Thy father, old Gilbert Onshaw, that now is o' the Woodhead, was one o' the keepers for fifteen year, and bi'rlady, I think he mended not his condition by dropping his office when he married your mother: but, no matter, boy, what's done's done; — here's his worship's health with all my heart."

"Your date puddin's mighty good, master steward; it's sweet as honey."

"It's as sweet as thine own lips, hussey," cried the amorous ancient; "bi'rlady, I must taste."

"Nay, fie on it, Master Winterbottom," exclaimed Rose, holding out her hands, while the steward performed the act of salutation; "if any o' the folk should see ye, they'd flout one to death."

"Nay, i'faith," cried the steward,

"that's the way I always pay myself, for what I bestow on any pretty wench; — there's nothing new in the matter."

"I thought ye had given me these sweets freely," said Rose.

"So I did, hussey, and thou did'st let me kiss thee freely, did'st a not?" cried the steward.

"Nay, marry, ye stole it," replied the damsel, archly.

"I stole it not," said the steward; "I kiss'd thee out of Christian courtesy."

"Saint Bruno liv'd in a far country,
Close to the side of the salt, salt sea;
And a rosy cheek'd wench, full of joyance and glee,
Had Saint Bruno, worthy Saint Bruno."

The voice of the steward, as he endeavoured to sing this stanza of an old ballad, quavered in a shrill treble, and he concluded amidst a fit of coughing which deprived him of articulation.

"Marry," said he, when he could speak, "my singing days are over, — dead and buried. I could sing once right daintily, — at his worship's first marriage, some thirty or forty year ago, I could sing like a blackbird, and skip

like a young fawn; — well, well, those days are byegone; I've had my acquaintance with the follies and conceits of youth, and ye are now enjoying them. Marry, I am now weaker than water, duller than the night-bat; but so it is, one cannot maintain strength for ever; and it is some comfort, that, with his years, doth increase a man's wisdom. Marry now, Anak, I know thou do'st never behold man that thou would'st fear to cope withal; but thou wilt become wiser anon, boy, — live and learn, live and learn."

"I'faith, master steward," said Rose, "Anak has seen one man, and fought with him, that he'll ne'er stand up against for time coming — I'll be's surety. I mean Master Stanley, that we come hither to see."

"What, hast thou foughten with his young worship?" said the steward in a whisper. "Eh! Saint Withold! 'tis well thou didst come off with thy life; — he's the fiercest man of the time, more deadly than the tiger, savage as the wild bull, cruel in his rage as a wolf, delight-

ing in blood and slaughter, as most men do in ease and revelry! Thou should'st hear some of the tales which his follower tells, in the hall here, when the gentry are in his worship's chamber: Eh! bi'rlady, the memory of 'em chills my old blood into ice."

"He's right bountiful, though he be so mad," said Rose.

"Ay, bless ye," replied the elder; "his man says, he thinks no more of gold, than I would of dust: in the wars, he jeopardies his life a thousand times for plunder, and when he hath it, flings it among his followers, as if it were of scurvy value. But then, if they are not as wild as devils, and as savage as himself, ready to dash through fire and water, he will think little of hanging up half-a-score tall fellows, for what he terms cowardice. — Mercy on us, who would follow him for all they could get?"

"Well, he's a neat hand wi' the sword," said Anak; "but I think I know one that'll mate wi' him, or any man of his kindred; and though he binna such a sheer devil, yet I'll uphold

him as bold a man, for a' his service i' the wars."

"I know, I know, boy," replied Winterbottom; "thou do'st mean the solitary man that ranges the park without his worship's leave. I caught a bye-word of his being seen by Master Stanley at your cottage. Adzooks, my little columbine, they say too that he has an eye upon thee; i'st true, wench? Does the outlaw affect thee?"

"Nay, marry, it winna do to tell secrets to old men," replied the rustic coquette, with an arch smile; "for ye be every whit as bad as women, and can no more hold a thing ye are trusted with than a sieve can keep water. But I wouldna have ye think I cast lures to catch roving birds. No, by my truly, I must have one that builds his nest i' my own country, and that will na flee when the winter comes. None o' your outlandish fowl that no one can name nor hold."

"The outlaw would have been in the high-tower by this time," said the steward, "if Master Stanley had not begged

him off. His worship was in a bitter rage, and swore he would have him strung up on the tallest tree in the park; but Master Stanley craved that he might go free. And so, ye see, as what ever he says is law with Sir George, order was given to the keepers to take no note of the outlaw's pranks, but to let him have free range whither he would. No one else durst have spoke for him; but the young cavalier is like to become his worship's son: the Lady Dorothy, — ye understand?"

"Is't talked of?" said Rose, earnestly.

"Is't talked of!" returned Winterbottom; "yea, ordered, arranged, concluded: that is, between the parties, — not in public; but a thing as certain as that the flood is lower than 'twas this day se'nnight."

"But what says the Lady Dorothy?" said Anak.

"Yea, what says Lady Dorothy?" said Rose.

"Nay, by'rlady, now ye press me over hard," exclaimed the steward; "I' faith over hard. I am too simple a man to

stand so nigh his worship as to be in the whole secret of their dispositions. The lady is a beautiful, pious, obedient, and dutiful lady; exceeding learned, grave, and discreet: I warrant ye she hath a knowledge of her duty. But if she like not the match, I see not how she may gainsay her father's will; no, marry, he will bear no contradiction—none i'faith."

"But seems Master Stanley fain o' the match?" said Rose.

"Fain! marry, I should like to see any man in England that would not leap at it," replied the steward. "Will she not have half of his worship's lands? Is she not a fine and handsome lady? I'faith she's worth the proudest lord that ever wore coronet."

"So she may, Master Winterbottom," returned the damsel, with a sigh, "and yet not jump with his liking. No one can tell—"

"Yea, marry, but I can tell well enough," cried the steward; "I have not come to these years without being able to note the signs of love. Here is this hot gallant, Master Stanley, that

for the first day he came was as wild as a young fox, and played his tricks upon every body i' the house, is now turned as sad and sober as Father John himself. At first his rich clothes seemed as if they had been thrown on him with a hay fork; now he plagues out the life of his servant with the setting of his ruff, and the fitting of his doublet; the slashes of his breeches, and the trussing of his points. He used to swear like a sword and buckler man at the bear-garden; now he speaks sugar-plumbs, and always in a whisper. He is ever by the side of his mistress; walks with her, rides with her, reads with her, and is her shadow, i'faith, from morning till night—what call ye these signs?—smell they not of love? Ha, ha, ha! by'rlady do they."

"I know not," said the incredulous Rose.

"Do'st a not?" returned the steward. "Marry, could'st a not tell whether Wat Needham was in love or no, when he came to see thee o' nights in his holiday gear?"

"Wat Needham was never jo o'

mine," replied Rose, rather superciliously; "I never favour'd him, — he canna say I did."

"Why, wench, it is said thou'rt become dainty since this outlaw sprung up," said Winterbottom; "that thou hast cleft the brain of poor Wat, by giving him his leave without cause assigned; the poor lad goes with his hose ungartered after a slovenly fashion, and hath not the heart of a mouse. Marry, wench, this is wrong; that outlaw will sometime repay thee thy scorn, — i'faith he will."

"If yon outlaw scorns me to-morrow, I carena a willow twig," said Rose.

"Yea, wench; for it will help to make thee a garland," replied Giles, "and thou may'st wear it for his sake."

"Thy shaft hath a wrong flight, master steward," returned the damsel. "I am in no danger."

"Why, then, I was not far wide in my thoughts," said the steward; "thou hast a mind to captivate his worship's son-in-law, or the knight, Sir Simon Degge, or, perhaps, his worship himself."

"Marry, Heaven keep me from such a

raw-boned skeleton as that knight, Sir Simon," cried Rose, holding up her hands; "such a lack-flesh, lenten-visaged scarecrow. I should think death had griped me in his arms, an he were to be loving: and his worship is as much on t'other side; he hath flesh enough on his bones to weigh against a southland ox."

"Go to, baggage," cried the steward, laughing, "thou art saucy; I see nought will serve ye but that wild, high-bred gallant, Master Edward Stanley. I fancy yon outlaw knows the young gentleman, and hath sent him a message by you."

"Nay, he hannot," replied Anak.

"Then ye have some favour to beg of him?" said the steward, anxious to learn the nature of their errand.

"Nay, we hannot," answered Anak.

"Perchance, he left some article at your cottage?" pursued Winterbottom.

"No, he didna," returned Anak.

"Then, pray, is't a secret that ye come about?" said the steward.

"Yea, it is," answered the woodman; "but ye're a discreet fellow, master steward, and I'll tell ye what 'tis."

"Stay ye a moment, boy," said the steward, rising; "we'll have another flaggon, and thou shalt tell me at thy ease."

Winterbottom took the flaggon from the table, and carried it to the buttery hatch to get it replenished; but he had no sooner quitted the hall than Anak, laying hold upon a large piece of butter, endeavoured to secret it in his pocket, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his more honourable sister. He was however interrupted, before he had accomplished his purpose, by the return of Winterbottom, and in the hurry of concealment thrust it into the breast of his doublet, not however unobserved by the steward, who nevertheless took no notice of the theft.

"The gentry will be here anon, boy," said Winterbottom; "and so we must leave the hall. But come along wench, come boy into the kitchen; it's snugger than this wilderness; we'll have our ale brought thither, and thou may'st tell thy tale without interruption."

He led the way by a short passage from

the hall into the large kitchen of the mansion, wherein was a fire ample enough to roast a whole bullock at a time, and being accustomed to heat, sat down at a small table, a little distance off, whereon the flaggon was deposited. Anak was placed at the opposite side of the table, but directly in front the fire, and Rose between them, so as to be sheltered from it by both.

"Well, boy," said the steward, after they had both drunk, "now for thy secret. Thou may'st tell it here; yon knaves cannot overhear us."

"Yea, I'll tell ye," replied Anak. "But its warmish here, i'faith; it'll sweat a' the fat out o'me."

"Thou'lt be none the worse, boy," said Winterbottom; "but I warrant thou'lt take no harm; nay, thou can'st not sit backward without being i' the way. Mind it not, lad, I stand it every day. Come, get on with thy tale."

"Yea; ye see yesternight about six o' the clock," said the woodman, holding his hand before his face, while the sweat poured down it in copious streams, "two

strangers knock'd at the door. 'Who's there?' cried father — by'rlady its as hot as hell."

"Tush, thou'rt a dainty lad," cried the steward; "thou'rt sure not afraid of burning thy face. Get on, boy, get on with thy story."

"'Who's there? cried father,'" pursued Anak, scraping the moisture from his brow. "'Two wayfarers,' answered one fellow in an outlandish voice. 'What the devil want ye?' said Gilbert—marry, the devil himself was never worse roasted than I am."

"Out upon it," cried the steward, "thou'rt as tender as a mew'd infant, with thy roasting; how would'st do if thou wert helper to the cook here, and obliged to stand close at the fire for six hours at a spell? Well, the strangers—"

"Why, at last, after a good deal of talk backward and forward," said Anak, "father opened the door and let 'em in. One of 'em's a broad-back'd, square-jointed, fierce-looking fellow as ever carried a sword at his thigh; and t'other—marry, my bones will melt into marrow an I sit

another minute; I canna bide it, by my troth."

"Thou do'st not drink, boy," said the steward, filling his cup, "toss down another horn of ale, and it'll cool thee, I'll be surety. Thou see'st we have no other convenient place to talk in, and I must hear out thy tale; so go on. What was the other stranger like?"

"I reckon he's foreign bred," answered Anak; "for though he talks English, its with a smatch o' some other tongue. He's a tall lathy made fellow, with a swarthy face, and seems but in sorry health. They asked father a' about Haddon, and what folk were here at this time—marry, I'm frying."

"Well, well, go on," said Winterbottom; "these are strange fellows, o' my word. Well, ye told them what company we had?"

"Yea, and they knew Master Stanley," replied the woodman; "they were fain of his being here, and would have him sent for betimes this morning. And so, ye see, we are come o' this errand. And now ye're told; and I'll be cursed

black if ever I was so broiled and basted since my name was Anak."

"Truly, I think thou art, boy," said the steward, looking at Rose with an arch and significant smile; "for thy grease doth run out through thy hose. I'faith, thou'rt dissolving like stewed butter."

And, indeed, the butter which the woodman had put into his breast, being dissolved by the force of the heat, had run down his clothes, and now trickled in streams over his breeches and hose; a sight which struck him and his sister with speechless mortification, but gave high satisfaction to the steward, who, with his hands behind him, surveyed the deplorable condition of the unfortunate thief, and laughed until his sides clinked with the exertion. Anak, who now perceived he was detected, was however in most dread of an explanation, which seemed inevitable; but he was happily released from this dilemma by the return of the gentry.

CHAP. IX.

The outlaw came; at his belt a blade,
Broad, short, and sharp was gleamin';
Free was his step, as one who had rul'd
Among knights and lovely women.

She would scorn my might, my own true love,
And the mother would weep that bore me,
If I stay'd my step for such strength as thine,
Or seven such churls before me.
THE SEVEN FORESTERS OF CHATSWORTH.

THE steward, awaiting the arrival of Edward Stanley in the hall, informed him of Anak's message, and conducted the woodman and his sister to him. Rose blushed and simpered; but as Sir George and his daughter, and Sir Simon Degge were present, the cautious intriguant took no further notice of the damsel than by saluting her with a smile and friendly nod. But Sir George, whilst Anak was busied in recapitulating his errand to Edward Stanley, approached the rustic beauty, and began to talk to

her with great familiarity. Her admirer, Sir Simon, too, did not cut her acquaintance, but stalked up to her, and grinned his compliments with singular condescension.

"Whose pretty rose-bud art thou?" said Sir George, taking her hand; "thou art a sweet one, by my faith."

"Yea, this is rosa sylvatica," said the knight; "the most fragrant of all roses. She is Rose by name, and sweeter than rose by nature; but she is a bud of a crabbed stock, and yonder is a scion of the original tree."

"Thou art never sister to that 'scape the gallows?" said the Knight of Haddon.

"Yes, an it please your worship," replied Rose, curtseying, "if I be my mother's child."

"The doubt is then whether thou be'st thy father's," returned Sir George; "but is not that the son of old Gilbert Ollerenshaw?"

"Yes, an it please your worship," replied Rose, "and I am his daughter."

"Then this is the wench that Stanley

kissed," said Sir George, laughing. "Ned, it is no wonder thy mouth watered; it is seldom a sly fox like thou art gets sight of such a bunch of grapes as this. Well, and thou didst come hither to see Master Stanley, didst a, pretty one?"

"Nay, marry, your worship," answered the damsel, holding down her head; "I came with Anak, but not to see Master Stanley."

"Oh, then, thou didst come to see me, or this knight, Sir Simon?" returned Sir George; "thou art heartily welcome."

"I came to see the hall," said Rose in a low voice; "but I would na have come a foot, an I had thought to be so flouted."

"Nay, i'faith, my little beauty," said Sir Simon, "thou knowest I put myself into thy pupilage, and I take it kind that thou art come to give me a lesson."

"Your worship will take it as you can catch it, belike," said Rose, laughing.

"Ay, and be thankful that he can get it," said Sir George; "but how do'st begin, my pretty honeysuckle? — Wilt thou teach him the art of twining a true lover's knot?"

"Nay, I told his worship he was past Maying time," said Rose. "I pray ye, pardon me, sirs; but his beard would frighten one's love out o' the window."

"Ha, ha!— his beard!" ejaculated Sir George. "What, will naught but a downy chin serve thee? If this knight's reverend countenance fright thee, what dost think of mine, wench? I am older than he is."

"Yea, but your worship is better favoured, begging his pardon," replied the cunning maiden. "His worship, Sir Simon, ever looks as if he had been drinking hard ale, or eating crabs; he hath a sour and melancholy aspect."

"There's for thee, knight," cried Sir George, with great exultation; "there's a picture of a youth commencing the rudiments of love! Ha, ha, ha!—a sweet gallant, o' my faith."

"Oh! thou unquenchable thirst of lucre! how thou do'st infect all breasts!" exclaimed the knight; "in the city or on the plain, amid the haunts of men or in the wilds of the desart, thine influence doth spread itself, and defile with its touch. The aged man with his foot upon

the bier, and the blooming maiden with step elastic as a young fawn's, are equally tainted by thee. Thou do'st inhabit the palaces of princes, and thou wilt find shelter in the cabins of the poor. All affect to despise thee, and call for curses upon thy name; but in secret do they hug thee to their hearts, and cherish thee above price or measure."

"Stop, man, stop," cried Sir George; "thou'lt be out of breath. What the devil are ye driving at, with your thirst of lucre? Who spoke of money, thou long-winded gossip?"

"Nay; but I do not exchange golden buckles and ready coin for kisses and squeezes," continued Sir Simon. "Some gallants that are younger than I am throw their baubles about as if they were of no value, save as the medium of dalliance. Let them that will for me: I must be loved for myself alone, and not for my gifts."

"Ha, ha, ha!—excellent, i'faith," cried Sir George, roaring with laughter; "and so thou would'st have these two flaming brilliants, these two cherry cheeks, these

pouting lips and wanton body, fall desperately in love with thy goggle eyes, lantern jaws, skinny chops, and spectre-shaped carcase. Ha, ha, ha! — thou would'st make a dainty image of blind cupid, o' my word. Loved for thy proper person — ha, ha!"

"Yea, after all your jibes," said Sir Simon, with an undismayed countenance, "I say for my proper person. What say you, fair Mistress Dorothy? Would it not snap the golden thread, the aureum filum of love, to know that you were sought and worshipped for your sterling value? Would it not attenuate still further that silken-line which passion spins out of our self-love, if—"

"Hold thy peace, man," cried Sir George indignantly; "thou would'st convert love into a spider's web, with thy threads and lines."

"And it is no better," replied Sir Simon; "it catches and holds the moths and flies that are not wary enough to avoid its meshes. It folds itself around them, and every kick and every plunge do entangle them still deeper. But where

now, Master Stanley? — what bids thee put on such a face of hurry?"

Stanley made no answer, but turning to Sir George Vernon, whispered somewhat in his ear, and then replacing his beaver on his head, and waving his hand for Anak to follow him, left the court. The woodman, having made his best bow, and his sister her most humble curtsey, they also quitted Haddon, and followed the soldier, leaving Sir Simon Degge in a posture of dumb admiration.

It required some exertion on the part of Anak and his sister to overtake Edward Stanley, short as had been their delay; for he strode away rapidly down the bank, quite inattentive to the call of the woodman, who desired him to move more gently.

"Tak' time, tak' time, sir," cried Anak, as he and his sister overtook him; "ye'll have to pull up bank e'en now, and ye'll need your wind,"

"Well, come hither, love-bird," said Stanley to Rose, "and I'll walk with thee. When one goes a Maying, every Jack should have his Gill."

"Yea, but the hawk does na sort wi' the wren, Master Stanley," returned Anak, drawing his sister close under his arm; "Rose is no Gill for you."

"Thou liest, churl," cried Stanley; "thou art no judge of the matter.—Leave her with me, and get thee onward to announce my coming."

"I would as soon leave Rose in the grasp of a wolf, or between the horns of a mad bull, as alone with you," said the bold woodman. "Nay, sir, I know well my life is in your hands, that is if ye can outrun me, but I will not leave ye for a second's space."

"Then stay, fool, and grow to the clod if it like ye," cried the fierce soldier; "but stand off, quit the girl."

"What for must I quit her?" said Anak, doggedly.

"Villain, dost bandy words with me?" exclaimed Stanley, laying his hand upon his rapier. "Wilt thou quit her or thy life?—for by the ghost of Saint Hugo thou shalt do one."

"Nay, tis na' much matter," returned

Anak, releasing the arm of his sister, which Stanley immediately laid hold upon; "I shall walk beside ye. Marry, 'tis a dainty sight to see velvet doublet and russet kirtle cheek by jowl. Rose, wench, do not listen to him. He'll tell thee a mint of lies—"

"How, sirrah!" cried Stanley, turning round; "I would have thee shew me more reverence, if thou would'st not have thy nose slit."

"Crave your pardon," said Anak, with an awkward bow, and an air of mixed roguery and simplicity; "I wot it is na the fashion where you come from to tell your mind; if ye can handle a whinger like that at your thigh, it matters not, be ye the devil himself. I say, Rose, do not thou believe him; he does na care a tester for thee, wench."

"Sirrah, thy life will not be worth half an one, if ye keep not your tongue still," said Stanley.

"Nay, 'tis plain enow," cried Anak, sturdily, "that a gentleman like your honour, would na marry the daughter of

a woodman; and I've no mind, d'ye see, that Rose should be aught save a honest woman."

"Rot thy honesty," cried Stanley; "who should make her otherwise? I wot she is no kin to thee, or her honesty is not worth the tester thou did'st speak of."

Rose peeped at her brother, whose remembrance of the butter scene caused him to look down rather abashed; but as he knew Stanley could have had no opportunity of learning his disgrace, he speedily recovered himself, and replied with great carelessness,

"There are more rogues, master, than go in woollen; and I wot it is more grievous, sir, to rob a man of his life than a fat buck."

"Fie, Anak," cried Rose; "Master Stanley never killed any body, I'll be his warrant."

"Go to, thou'rt a silly wench, a blind beetle," cried Anak, warmly; "I would not bail him that he's not slain a score men; he has the trick of his weapon too keenly for an innocent."

"Then folk might say thou'rt a brawler," returned the soldier's pretty apologist, "because thou can'st handle a back-sword."

"Folk may think as they will, wench," answered Anak, "I am no whit better than I should be; but there are many worse. Thou art witch'd, I ween, to hold part with this fine fellow; thou may'st know a snake by his mottled skin."

"And a fool by his speech," said Stanley; "like thine ancient namesake thou art a monstrous big one."

"Blasphemer!" cried a voice, which seemed to proceed from a thicket at one side of the path. The voice was hollow and unearthly, and produced a sensation of fear both upon Rose and her brother; but it served only to irritate the soldier, who after stopping for a moment to recollect whence the sound issued, drew his rapier and plunged into the wood.

"Marry, Rose," said Anak, in an under tone, whilst he trembled in every limb, "this comes of fooling with such a dare-devil as Master Stanley."

"Was't not the outlaw?" said Rose,

drawing close to her brother, and looking fearfully towards the spot whence the voice came.

"No, I'll be sworn," answered her brother; "he could never change his mellow notes into the raven croak of such a death-bird as uttered that word. By'rlady, it chills my blood, though the sun's shining.

"But where's Master Stanley?" said Rose, whose fear did not deprive her of apprehension for her gay lover.

"With the fiends for what I know or care," replied Anak; "sorry's the hour when I saw his face."

"Oh, Anak, fie upon thee!" returned Rose; "would'st thou have so handsome a gentleman perish body and soul to pleasure thy churlishness? Fie on thee."

"Keep thy tongue from wagging so loudly," said Anak, "if thou would'st not have us dragged into a like scrape; I am none so fond of this swaggering fellow to seek fellowship in his danger. But come along with thee, wench; if the fiends have got their morsel, they'll

be too busy about the breaking o'nt to meddle with us."

Although unwilling to leave Stanley in hazard, Rose was now obliged to accompany her brother, who led her onward with wary step, and his eyes thrown about him, like some traveller in the forests of America, who is in constant dread that some venemous reptile meditates an attack upon him. In a short time, however, they emerged into a more open part of the park, where the Wye, now reduced to its ordinary capacity, flowed gently along, in marked contrast with its late swollen and irrepressible fury. The passion of the waters (if we may use the figure) had now subsided; and, like that of humanity, seemed to leave behind it a languishing and listless equanimity, a calmness which in itself denoted the violent agitation which had preceded it. There were, besides, other tokens of its rage. Large trees at some distance from the bed of the river were bent nearly to the ground; their honourable tops bowed to the earth, and buried

in the mud, while their roots were half torn up, and in despite of their natural tendency elevated in the air. But these wrecks of the storm were not observed either by Anak or his sister, or if observed, so casually as to call forth no remark. They were too much rejoiced to find themselves in the company of several keepers who reclined upon a rising bank by the river side, to think either of the flood or its effects.

"Mass, Wat!" cried Anak, to one of them, "I'm glad to see thee, lad. I never saw thy face before that I liked it better."

"Wat Needham would fain have thy sister to like his face, not thee, Anak," said one of the fellows.

"What is't ails thee?" said Needham. "Thou dost look as if thou hadst been caught with a fat staggarde on thy back. How now, Rose, thou'rt as white as a new smock, wench. What ails ye, in the fiend's name?"

"Nay, Walter Needham," replied Rose, "talk ye not of the fiend; he hath

laid hold upon one this morn, and that's enow."

"Hath any man here seen Master Stanley to day?" said Anak.

"Yea, he rode on the river bank with his worship," replied Needham; "we have not seen him since he passed."

"I wot if your outlaw saw him so near the Lady Dorothy, Anak, as we did," said another of the woodmen, "he'd have marked him with the broad arrow."

"Nay, by'rlady, say not so," cried Needham, whom our readers will recollect to be the discarded suitor of Rose; "if ye make the outlaw wither-galled, for the Lady Dorothy's companionship with Master Stanley, ye will have pretty Rose about your ears for the loss of her paramour."

"Pretty Rose would as soon be stirred for the loss of thee, Wat Needham," cried the damsel, with ineffable contempt.

"A fair challenge, by the mass!" cried Needham, leaping up and advancing to Rose. "What! does the wind change at last, wench? Nay then, if I

do not hoist sail, I wish I may never come into port."

"Thou hadst best mind thy tackle," said Rose, "or thy boat will upset. Stand back, Wat; the wind does not favour thee yet."

Whilst they were in the heat of this amorous contest, the attention of the keepers was drawn to a herd of deer which had been quietly grazing on the bank of the river, but which now fled away with great rapidity, leaving behind one fine hart, which, pierced with a shaft from an unknown hand, had fallen dead upon the sward. The foresters started upon their feet, but were prevented from the trouble of seeking the hunter by the appearance of the outlaw, who came forth from the wood. He was clad in a suit of green-cloth, with buff boots, a deeply flapped Spanish beaver, with a drooping plume of dark ostrich feathers, and wore a rapier in place of the heavy shabble or broadsword which was a usual part of a forester's dress. He bore in his hand a mighty bow, and a quiver full of arrows rested upon his back.

Without regarding the presence of the woodmen, who seemed disposed to rob him of his prey, he advanced to the hart, which lay upon the bank, and leisurely set about extricating his arrow. The rustic suitor of Rose Ollerenshaw, still jealous of his mistress's affection for the outlaw, and therefore disposed to treat him with churlish insolence, first went towards him, and placing his foot upon the body of the deer, said, "Though thy body is free, master outlaw, by his worship's order, —"

"Rather by my own will, good fellow," replied the outlaw, interrupting him.

"Yet we have no command to let thee run off with his worship's deer," continued Needham.

"What! ye are directed to carry them whither I would?" said the outlaw. "Marry, sir, inform your lord, I thank him for his courtesy, but I will not trouble you this time; here is a man who will do well enough for my need: ho! Anak! throw me this hart over thy shoulder, and follow me."

"Neither Anak nor thou shalt stir the deer from the swath, master green-jacket," cried Needham, fiercely, "unless ye first lay me upon't."

"I will satisfy thy condition presently," returned his rival with a smile; and seizing him by the throat, before he could defend himself, the outlaw threw him upon the turf, and placed his foot upon his breast. The other woodmen, fired with rage at the sight of their comrade's fall, instantly began to prepare their bows; but the outlaw drew his rapier, and threatened upon the first shot to plunge it into the throat of his vanquished enemy. This menace soon dispelled the storm that loured upon the brows of the woodmen, and they bade him carry off the deer he had shot, and release their fellow.

"Not so, gentlemen," replied the outlaw, gaily; "for if I were to give ye up this churl, I warrant ye would repay my courtesy with half-a-score arrow-flights."

"Nay, we will do thee no foul play," replied the keepers.

"Indeed you shall not," cried the outlaw; "for I will not trust ye. — Rise, sirrah!" he continued, kicking Needham with his foot; "rise, and hoist this hart upon thy shoulders. — Here, Anak, give him a hand, 'tis a weighty fellow. Now get thee on; and see ye follow not, fellows, or I will carve him as well as ye ever saw deer broken and served in Haddon hall."

The woodman, Walter Needham, having, with Anak's assistance, though with a reluctant and sullen countenance, raised the deer upon his shoulders, now marched onward in front of the outlaw, whilst Anak and his sister, arm in arm, followed immediately after. They proceeded some distance in silence, the woodman being too indignant, and the other two rustics too careful in their observation of the outlaw's humour, to speak, whilst the outlaw himself walked forward with careless gaiety, occasionally whistling or humming a tune. When they had advanced into the wood, and lost sight of the other keepers, Rose Ollerenshaw, in whose breast a good

deal of compunction had arisen for the treatment which her old lover had received, the cause of whose churlishness and consqeuent defeat lay in her own charms, began to be somewhat softened towards the unhappy woodman, and quitting her brother's arm, she passed on to the front rank, and took her station beside him. There was no touch of yielding tenderness in this movement, but merely a feeling of gracious and merciful condescension, which most conquerors feel for the victims of their ambition; and with that galling fretfulness which marks the men whom fortune captivates, her lover, when he beheld the maiden at his side, said bitterly, "What! thou would'st see me the slave of thy paramour, would'st a? Well, here I am; — he has stricken me, spurned me, and threatened my life: he can do nought more but take it. Ask him for't; he will give it thee — he does not stand on trifles. For a kiss of thine, curse on him, he would drive his knife into my throat."

"I know not what he'd do, Walter,"

replied Rose, "for I never begged favour of him; but he must do somewhat better, I trow, ere he gets kiss o' me."

"What! he must feed thee with flatteries, and bedizen thee with golden bobs, and silken cords and tassels, belike," said Needham; "these buy kisses and love to boot, now-a-days — a pize on thy harlotry."

"Thou'rt a fool, Wat Needham," replied the damsel, "or I would learn thee better manners. — Mind ye, man, Anak is nigh at hand."

"An if he be, I care not a jay's feather," returned the woodman. "Thou may'st tell him what I've said; and if he mind it, let him come down to the waters to night."

"I'm none such a skittle-brain, lad," said Rose, "as to set friends a fighting for such stuff as thou hast spoken."

"It would not be the first time thou hast been foughten for," said Needham; "this gallant, and that hot youth ye were seeking, have had a brush about ye, or folk belie thee, wench."

"Why, then, they do, Walter," replied Rose; "for they speak not truth who say so."

"Oh! marry, no; it cannot be truth, that Master Stanley kissed and squeezed pretty Rose," said Needham, with a malicious grin, "and that this worshipful outlaw was jealous of him, and drew sword to guard his right to thee?"

"No, 'tis a lie, — a vile tale, fashioned for mischief," cried Rose.

"Then Stanley did not kiss thee?" said her suitor.

"'Tis nought to thee," answered the damsel, sullenly. "Thou wilt believe aught; and 'tis little purpose to defend one's self."

"He did not give thee a golden buckle?" said Needham.

"I tell thee, 'tis no matter what he gave me," returned Rose.

"Nay, I am not jealous of Master Stanley," said Walter; "he hath his head too high to catch a look of thee. Marry, 'tis said so has thy leman here; but I wot he is not bird of wing enough to mate with the hawk."

"Why, what a dull owl must thou be, then," retorted the maiden, with great contempt, "to be struck down by such a base ruffler."

"I was not 'ware of him," answered Needham; "beside, he's armed with sword and dagger."

"Talk not to me," said Rose; "an a man be armed with courage, he has more to depend on than steel and iron. Ye cannot take a mettled man by surprise; he is ever on his guard."

Whilst this discourse had engaged Rose Ollerenshaw and her jealous lover, the outlaw had suffered Anak to come up with him, when his discourse naturally turned upon the recent contest, and with his usual frankness the woodman informed his companion of the motives which actuated Walter Needham in his unfortunate opposition.

"The lad's na so much to be blamed," said Anak; "for ye see he followed Rose for some three years afore your honour came to Haddon, and he thinks that the wench has looked a whit colder on him since. 'Tis but his fancy,

belike; but, ye wot, a jealous pate makes a furious heart; and the whole country misca's him for't."

"Is the lad honest?—hath he any friends?" said the outlaw.

"Yea, he is honest enow, for matter o' that," replied Anak, "an ye will take the word of a deer-stalker; and has good friends—friends that would help him at a pinch, without reckoning cost."

"And hath Rose any liking for him?"

"Troth, I know not; she had six months back, and may still, if your worship's fine carriage has not driven poor Wat out of her head."

"By my life, I hope not: I have been ever distant with her; but I fear me, Anak, the carriage of another gallant, his familiarity, his splendour and lavish bounty, have made a deeper impression on thy sister than aught she has seen in me."

"You mean Master Stanley; and truly I fear'd as much: but if your honour would satisfy poor Wat, it will make him your friend, and such are wanted here."

"Thou say'st rightly," replied the banished man, with a sigh; and hastening forward, he accosted the woodman, and bade him set down his burthen. Needham, with the same sullen aspect with which he had taken up the deer, flang it from his shoulders upon the ground, and was walking off, when the outlaw bade him stay, and pulling out his purse, offered him a piece of gold.

"I want none of your money," said the woodman, though in a tone which shewed that he was softened at the stranger's liberality; "you have stolen that from me was dearer than gold;—put up your money, I'll have none on't."

"I have stolen from thee, good fellow!" said the outlaw, with a smile, "why, thou do'st not surely mean the deer?"

"The deer—the devil!" cried Walter; "an ye had stolen all the deer in Haddon park, and left me Rose, I would not have said ye nay."

"Then say me not nay now," cried

the outlaw; "for I pledge thee my honour she is loyal for me, and so hath ever been."

"Thou may'st believe him, Wat," said Anak; "I will avouch whatever his honour doth utter."

"Nay, it is fit that such pains should be taken to make him credit what was never questioned afore," said the pretty Rose, disdainfully; "beside, sirs, what is't to Wat Needham who are my sweethearts? — I trow, he is no master o'mine: your honour had no occasion to say a word about the matter: he'll now tell folk that I courted your honour, and you disclaimed me."

"Ay, that will I, unless ye are a whit kinder than ye have been, Rose," said Needham, smiling for the first time since his meeting with the stranger. "And now, sir outlaw, I'll take your money, and be glad on't. I know not whence ye come, nor who ye are; but your gold shall fly in a jolly carouse, and I'll drink your health with Rose O'nshaw's, though the devil fetch me, if I would have ye nearer acquainted."

"Thou art an honest fellow," said the outlaw; "and if Rose will marry thee, I will give her twenty nobles for her wedding clothes."

They were interrupted by a distant cry of murther; and the outlaw, drawing his sword, ran away towards the place whence the sound seemed to proceed, followed by Anak, Needham, and, as she durst not stay behind, Rose Ollerenshaw.

CHAP. X.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true.
COMUS.

GUIDED by the cries, the outlaw and his companions hastened up a narrow avenue, which grew gradually wider as they advanced, until they came to an open spot upon the bank of the river. Here they found two men engaged in a desperate contest, one of whom they soon perceived was Edward Stanley, whose naked sword was warded from the body of his antagonist by the mere interposition of his hands, which were cut and lacerated with the edges of the blade. Still the stranger struggled manfully, and seemed capable of maintaining his hold on the weapon so long as his fingers were not cut off, or the loss of his blood, which covered the whole rapier from pommel to point, and thence trickled to the ground, did not occasion a failure of his

strength. At sight of the rescue, however, Stanley, who plainly aimed at destroying his foe, abandoned the sword, and drawing his dagger, would, in a moment, have buried it in the heart of the stranger, if the outlaw had not interposed, and, by receiving the furious dagger-stroke upon his own sword, delivered another life from the murtherous arm of the libertine soldier. Stung to madness at this check upon his rage, Stanley struck at the gallant outlaw; but he was too cool, and too much upon his guard, to allow the random stroke any effect. It failed, and Stanley, wearied with his exertion, stood panting for breath, and glaring with savage fury upon all present. In the mean time the stranger had fainted with loss of blood, and it was some time before Anak and Needham, by throwing water upon his face, could restore him to sensibility.

"Odzends!" cried Anak, "it's mad Ashby, that every one thought flitted the country."

"Eh, sirs!" exclaimed the pitiful Rose, whose compassion for the state of the fana-

tic, for the present superseded her admiration of the soldier; "look ye, how his poor hands are mangled: see ye how he still gripes that bloody sword: give it me — give it me, dear heart. So, gently — there now: this wicked steel shall do no more harm, I'll be caution," and running to the river, before any one could withhold her, she threw it into the midst of the water. "There rest thee, devil's weapon; thou hast ended thy work."

"Would mine were ended," said the enthusiast, reviving, but in a state of partial insanity. "Oh! that mine were the death of a dog, so I might be at rest — so I might escape these horrible tortures. Where shall I seek my refuge?"

"Villain!" exclaimed Stanley, "thou shalt never find a refuge, though thou seek it eternally!"

"Ha! the fiend again!" cried the unhappy sufferer, shuddering with horror. "Save me, save me: — avaunt, wicked one — avaunt, spawn of hell. Save me, ye blessed —"

"Hypocrite, knave, thou did'st know me but now!" cried Stanley; "I am he

thou hast cheated. I will have my revenge."

"I know thee — I know thee!" returned Ashby, gnashing his teeth, and writhing his body in anguish; "thou art my evil angel. I feel the fire that thy damned touch hath left upon my body! Avaunt, fiend! Avoid thee, cursed spirit! — Reduce this body and soul into ashes, if thou can'st. What! thou can'st not, spirit as feeble as thou art malign — hence with thee."

"I pray ye, leave him," said the outlaw to Stanley; "his mind is distempered — fear hath distracted him."

"The villain feigns," cried Stanley, fiercely; "his mood will only last till I am gone."

"Then the sooner you are gone the better," returned the outlaw. "It is unfit the weakly minded should be held in mortal agony by the presence of such a ruffian."

"Oh, sir outlaw, is it thou?" said Stanley, approaching him, with a sneer of contempt; "I see thou dost ape the knight-errant still: the good genius of

all the knaves and fools in the country. Thou art the Robin Hood of the sixteenth age; and, on the least note of violence, thou and thy merry men, I trow, are ready to spring out of the green-wood to the succour of the oppressed."

"My knighthood, Colonel Stanley," replied the outlaw, "is more genuine than your honour or humanity: my adventures are, perchance, not so warlike as your's; but Heaven forbid they should be as disgraceful."

"Then thou knowest what my deeds have been," replied Stanley, "and may'st learn from them what I am. As for thee, sir lack-name, if one may guess by thy speech, thou art one of those soplivered braggarts that let talking of action serve for the thing itself."

"You are a villain and a liar," cried the outlaw, indignantly, laying his hand upon his rapier."

"Nay, marry, sir of the wood," returned Stanley, with a sneering smile, "I pray ye be not angry; or if thou be'st so, let it pass. I do not crack jests, except with those that wear their wit in

their scabbards; and I durst swear thine is none of the sharpest."

"This company is not fitting; neither art thou armed," said the outlaw, in a low voice, to Stanley, "or I would do thee the courtesy to put thee a little on exercise; but a time shall come—"

"Oh, waste not the precious hours, gentle sir," cried Stanley, ironically; "draw thy sword, and come on; I will freely give thee the advantage of thy weapon. These churls dare take no part; but if thou fearest they would play the sticklers between us, let us walk further into the wood."

"No, sir, it shall never be said that I had odds on my side against any man in combat," replied the outlaw; "we will meet fairly, and even-matched."

"Why, then, we will meet," said the soldier, turning on his heel; and then addressing Anak Ollerenshaw, with a wave of his hand, he cried, "Ho, sir!—forward."

"The woodman, with some reluctance, quitted the fanatic, and leaving him in the hands of the outlaw, Walter Needham

and his sister, led the way along the bank of the river.

It will now, perhaps, be necessary to inform our readers of the causes which originated the *rencontre* between Stanley and the enthusiast, Ashby, and which had nearly ended in an adventure perfectly tragical. On quitting Lathom, after escaping from the snares laid for him by the treacherous conspirator, Edward Stanley, Ashby made the best of his way into Derbyshire, where he had lately lived, at no great distance from Haddon; and, as he knew the Lady Margaret was expected to return home in a few days after he quitted Lancashire, he had lingered about the park, in daily hope of meeting her, but hitherto without effect, her delay in returning to Haddon being caused by that compact which had been made between her and Edward Stanley, before the latter quitted his paternal towers. But of this compact the enthusiast knew nothing, and he durst not enquire the day of the Lady Margaret's return from any of the family, lest his reason should be enquired into, and

he should be taken before Sir George Vernon ; a step which he had good cause to avoid.

According to his custom, Ashby was prowling over the park, when Edward Stanley, Anak, and his sister, were passing from Haddon to the wood head, (the cottage of Ollerenshaw,) and observing, through a vista of the wood, that his persecutor was one of the number, he retired into a thicket ; but, as our readers know, could not repress his censure upon hearing Stanley liken the herculean woodman to the Anak of Scripture. He had, however, scarcely uttered the word which his indignation suggested, when he condemned his folly, in drawing upon himself the renewed violence of that demoniac spirit, whose savage and flinty cruelty he was well acquainted with ; and, judging that his only chance of safety lay in flight, he instantly quitted the thicket and made towards the river. But the blood-hound was upon him ; and although, for a considerable time, Stanley could not perceive the form of the person that had exclaimed upon him, yet he marked his progress by

the rustling of the leaves and branches through which he passed. Neither was Stanley ignorant of the voice: he remembered well the harsh and growling notes of the fanatic, and the enthusiastic cadence of his enunciation, and his quick fancy speedily wrought a chain of conclusions which argued ill for the safety of Ashby, if he were overtaken.

Stanley now saw, or fancied he saw, the reason of the Lady Dorothy's coldness and aversion. The fanatic had been with her: he had betrayed the whole story of his attack upon and persecution of her sister to his new mistress; of his attempt upon Ashby's own life; of his having excited jealousy in the mind of his brother, and projected the sacrifice of the Lady Margaret's honour to his own schemes of ambition. He had now no doubt but that Ashby had been despatched on this very errand to Haddon; (for he either did not know, or did not recollect, that the enthusiast had lived in Derbyshire,) and the thought that he had been betrayed, — that his iniquitous conduct had been revealed to the object of

his new attentions — that he had been passing himself off for a specious character, where his true one was perfectly known,—that his hopes were now blasted, at least the hope of making any impression on the serious and sensible Dorothy; altogether raised his mind to a pitch of fury which could not be surpassed by the ravings of any creature, human or brutal; and he resolved, without delay, to sacrifice the unfortunate fanatic to his supposed losses and resentment.

His activity soon enabled him to overtake the less agile Ashby, with whom he came up on the bank of the river, and, with a yell of savage delight, he grasped the fanatic by the throat. But as his victim was by no means a fearful man, and was, besides, of great bodily strength, he soon freed himself from the suffocating grasp of his adversary, and, pushing him backwards, sought to overcome his fury by expostulation; but the fierce soldier was too much resolved on his purpose to waste time in argument: his rapier was already bare, and he ran upon the fanatic, ntending to drive the steel through his

heart; but the bold dreamer dashed aside the blade with his arm, and seizing upon it near the hilt with both hands, held it fast, at the same time making the park reecho with the cry of 'murther,' which, as our readers have seen, happily brought the outlaw to his rescue.

As the foiled traitor pursued his way along the bank of the river, he detailed over in his mind every circumstance of this adventure; he again considered those several arguments which had prompted him to take away the life of the enthusiast, and endeavoured to frame such apologies for the facts which he deemed Ashby had imputed to him, as should in some measure soften (to excuse was impossible) their hideous aspect. It was a mark of his character that he did not capitulate on the first abandonment of fortune, in whose smiles any coward might wave his pennon; but whose frowns alone could try the mettle of the man of courage; and he resolved to be fully assured, before he withdrew from his attack, that the enemy was in possession of his designs, and gave credit to the in-

formation she had received. Thus resolved, but without having fixed upon any definite plan, Stanley was conducted by Anak Ollerenshaw to the door of his father's cottage. It was half open and he stopped to listen on the threshold.

"Sirs, sirs," said a female voice in a low and muttering tone, "it was pleasant sight to see the monks and the friars, and the saints i' their holyday-clothes; to hear the singing and the psalmistry. No good's come o' the change; blessed was the land i' the late Queen's days, and cursed i'st now, for sure."

"Verdammlich!" growled a fierce voice, which Stanley immediately recognized as that of the German Colonel Sparandam, "the country is going hellward like the devilish lurch of a ship going down in fifty fathom."

"Sirs, sirs," responded the female, "it's a bad world to see; the spawn of heresy are now swelled into monsters; they devour us poor lampreys of the brook; they are blasphemers, and cry out with ribbald tongues on the followers of holy church."

"Let the leviathans overgorge themselves," said a third voice, whose gentleness denoted it to be the Jesuit's; "they will be taken the more safely; let them cry out upon our faith, their tongues will soon ache with the exercise. But let not our endeavours be relaxed one jot until England and all Christendom resume her proper fealty. I mean that spiritual one she doth owe to the sacred head of the church."

"Sirs, sirs, would it were so!" said the female. "Where see ye now amid the knights and nobles of the heretical faction, the free heart and open hand o' the right Catholic gentry? Marry, sirs, that young gentleman, Master Stanley, that Anak hath wended to the ha' for, did but take shelter here for some half hour, and he paid for't with a princely gift."

Stanley now thrust the door open, and found his own comrades in mortal flesh and blood, safe from the dangers of the seas and tempest. Each of them sprang up to meet him, and welcomed him after his own several nature, the Jesuit with tears, and the German with

a volley of oaths and execrations, whilst he returned their gratulations with great joy. But amidst their rejoicing they took especial care, notwithstanding the apparent devotion of the woman, who was the wife of Ollerenshaw, to be silent on every point which concerned their persons or their business; a conduct which was the more necessary, as Anak still lingered about the door.

"Wohl!" ejaculated the Colonel, when he could obtain a distinct hearing, and speaking by analogy to cloke his meaning, "how lies the land? Not, I hope, like that d—d flat you left us on, where we had nigh paid devil's tithe."

"No," replied Stanley smiling, "the corn is ripe for harvest, and a fair one it is like to bring.

"Ay, if there be reapers enow," said Sparandam, "and they can find sickles for the work."

"Shall I quit the house, Sirs?" said Dame Ollerenshaw, rising from her seat. "Ye may perchance think I have not the sense to take your meaning; but I would not, for the worth of England, my son

or my husband should hear ye. I will out to the door, if it like ye, and send the boy on some errand, ye will then be safe, and may speak as ye please; for there's none other about the house.

"Der fiend! what does the woman mean?" cried Sparandam.

"That I can tell, little as ye deem on't," replied the woman, "that ye are three noble gentlemen, who have a good cause in hand. — Heaven prosper it? And I know one that will sure help ye with more than words and good wishes."

"Das Weib!" cried the German, "She's mad."

"What mean ye, good dame?" said the Jesuit.

"Stay," replied she, going gently to the door, which, after looking out, she closed, and returned; "the lad's gone, and ye may now speak out, if ye be not affear'd of me."

"Nay, do thou speak, Goody," said Stanley; "what dost thou take us for?"

"Nay, I know ye, Master Stanley," replied the woman; "the night your honour sheltered here with Sir Simon

Degge, I was but a-bed in the loft; and on bruit of the affray ye had wi' our wilful folk, I rose up and peeped at ye from a crack i' the floor. These are friends of yours, I trow."

"Well, and what of that?" said Stanley.

"Nought but this," answered Dame Ollerenshaw. "My husband and son, good help the knaves, are little better than Turks in conscience;—the lad takes after his father; as for myself, sirs, I was bred at the hall, in the family of his worship, Sir George Vernon, blessed be the day, and had plentiful instruction in that which is most precious, the true faith."

"Well, goody, this sorts," said Stanley.

"Sirs," ejaculated the dame, "it was not, be sure, without good profit and abundant joy that one came into our cottage, like this holy man," pointing to the Jesuit, "to whom I could say what I would of the days that are past, days to be mourned after, and to be prayed for: nay, I had not held speech with him one half hour, but I knew he was a shepherd of the righteous flock,—a good pastor, a

faithful shepherd. Ye may guess, then, that coupling your appearance with your faith, and your faith with that ye have uttered, even a woman that is not blind might come at your secret. Ye have been too open, sirs, and I have to reproach ye, mean as I am and poor, though, Heaven knows, I would give my all in this cause, that ye have perilled the safety of your plot, whatever it may be, in laying yourselves open to the stranger."

The conspirators looked at each other for some moments in silence, whilst the woman, who, on Stanley's entrance, seemed of that order in the classes of human nature, which is formed of the dross of the material, all at once assumed a better form, a brighter eye, a taller stature, and a more commanding aspect. She was, if the truth must be told, of a very diminutive make, with theexception of her head, which appeared to be unnaturally distended beyond any proportion with the rest of her body ; and its features, in conformity with this disproportion, were frightfully hideous, but still retained a cast of fierce levity, which was not inhe-

rited from nature, but left as the traces of a paralytic disorder, to which the woman had been long subjected.

Dame Ollerenshaw, had not at all times been so ordinary in aspect as now. Disease and age, the sting of want, and her husband's brutal disposition, had combined to rob her of her personal attractions, of which there was a tradition she possessed in her youth a tolerable share; and perhaps her own passions, which, when excited, were of the wildest character, had done no little towards giving her that appearance of a "foul and midnight hag," which she now bore. At all events, she was a woman of a soul superior to her station in life; and her present conduct evinced that she possessed a penetration and knowledge of mankind of a high order. That a woman in her rank should feel an attachment so strong to the faith she had been bred in, is by no means to be wondered at, especially when we consider that there was a motive still more powerful than education for the reverence of the Romish church by the poor, viz. the constant donations that

were doled out to those in want by the regular clergy, a means of support that had quite failed since the suppression of the monasteries.

During those times of ecclesiastical dominion, too, there was always some good priest or worthy friar who made a point of perambulating the district of his house, and of calling at the mansions of the rich and the cottages of the poor. Then Dame Ollerenshaw could at all times have a pious friend to succour her against the furious paroxysms of her husband, and to prescribe him penance and mortification for the ill-treatment of his wife; though slander, ever fruitful of inventions to blacken the clergy, dared to whisper that the confessions of the dame to her ghostly fathers, were too long and too frequent for the honor of her spouse, who, it was said, was not insensible of his orion-like appearance. The evils, therefore, which accrued to the dame, may fairly be deduced from the great changes in religious government; for it was not until the monasteries were put down, and the monks had de-

parted, that poverty and its consequent strife, took up their abode in the cottage of the woodman: poverty introduced disease, which changed the healthy-looking and buxom wife of the woodman into a pale and shrivelled creature, with a swollen and hideous head, such as we have described her. Since this change in her person, it was rarely that the woman stirred over her threshold; but if she was met in the wood by any solitary rustic towards nightfall, her presence excited almost as much fear as if a spectre had crossed his path, and "he crossed his brow, and he bent his knee," with superstitious awe. She was not, however, as most females in her state would have been, of a malicious and querulous disposition. Her heart was naturally frank and generous, and, in the midst of all her miseries, she retained a warm and benevolent character; subject, of course, as all uneducated minds are, to be disturbed by opposition, and, as she was of impetuous temper, to be blown into a storm by much collision. Having said thus much of the person and character of

this female, it is time to return to the business of our story. Silence was first broken by the Jesuit, who, after regarding the woman for some minutes with an eager gaze, said, "Say ye, good Dame, ye were bred in the house of the Vernon?"

"Yea, sirs," answered Dame Ollerenshaw, "I passed my happy days under the roof of Haddon; I went there a flaxen-hair'd wench of ten years old; and I think the fiend must have bewitched me to marry the keeper, Gilbert Onshaw, when my fortune was made by staying at the Ha'."

"Knewest thou Constance Heartle, of the Monsal Dale?" said the Jesuit, in a voice faint with emotion.

"What!" shrieked the woman, with a voice which resembled the scream of a tormented fiend, and with features which baffled description. "Know I whom? Constance Heartle? Yea, marry, who should I know better than myself? But who art thou? Merciful Heaven! — thou art not, — and for my soul I can't disbelieve but thou art my brother."

"I am, I am, thou child of misery!"

cried the Jesuit, with a convulsive embrace. "I am Reginald, a brother lost to thee for forty years."

"Thanks be to Heaven!" cried the woman; "it hath done wonders for thee, Reginald. It has made thee a captain in its service."

"Well, too, hath it upheld thee, Constance," said the Jesuit. "Thou hast been, since thy marriage, as a lamb amid wolves,—as a Christian amid the heathen; and our brother, the little Philip—I call him little, for he was so when I left ye—what! thou do'st shake thy head?—he is dead, then! Heaven's will be done."

"He is not dead in the flesh," said the woman, sternly; "but in trespasses and sins: he's a heretic; a scorner of our faith, of the faith of his fathers; he's a vagabond on the earth."

"Ha, how comes this?" said the Jesuit.

"When thou did'st leave us," replied Dame Ollerenshaw, "on thy travels abroad, me in the household of the Vernon, where thy virtue had found friends, and Philip to the care of our uncle, thou hadst then

no thought but of our welfare ; but it was not fated so : our uncle in a few years after joined the heretical faction in his heart, as I have since learned, though to keep his farm under the Knight of Haddon, he still affected duty to our church. By him was Philip led away, and his soul darkened with the errors of the schismatics, though his young mind abandoned with reluctance the faith of his fathers. But the lad, proud in his heart and vain of his knowledge, plunged into the sea of contention ; and when he arrived at that age which should have brought discretion with it, his mind was dead, his reason was drowned, clean washed away, by the torrent of fanatical cant he learned from his kinsman."

" He was not mad ?" said the Jesuit.

" Yea, brother, mad," answered the woman ; " mad as the winter wind when it sweeps through the wood. By times he was sad and heavy, as though his life were burthensome, and then he would burst out into a fury such as never shook man in his right senses ; he raved of fate and damnation, and I know not what else ;

deemed himself utterly lost—a castaway —a broken vessel. Thus did he remain until the death of our kinsman, and the loss of that man, who in temporal matters had stood him i'the stead of a father, seemed to recall his senses; but he fell away again speedily. He now openly professed his faith in the reformed church, as he called it, and set his lord, Sir George Vernon, at defiance; at length his worship, wearied of his insolence, thrust him out of the farm, and turned him on the world. Alack! I had then long left Haddon, and could not speak for him. The keeper, Gilbert Onshaw, who had witch'd me to marry him, lay under Sir George's wrath for driving the deer, so I durst not say a word; he was put out of the farm, and his whole gear rouped and lost."

"It was Heaven's pain upon his sins," said the Jesuit.

"He wandered the country o'er," continued the dame. "No one durst harbour the foe of the Vernon; and though my husband cares not a straw for our blessed faith, yet he would not run risk

to save the wretch from famine, though he had perished on a ditch bank. He must have perished, but I went myself to the castle, and told the ladies Dorothy and Margaret of his case; they, blessed be they for ever! relieved him privately. He went nightly beneath the chambers of those lovely maidens, and they fed him and furnished him with money for his wants. Folk say he has not forgot their charity,—that if he has any love it is for them alone."

"When saw ye him?" said the Jesuit.

"I?" said his sister; "I have not laid eyes on him these half score of years; my faith has kept him away from our cottage; nay, to this hour, my children know not that the madman, Ashby,—he took his uncle's name,—is their near kinsman."

"Ashby!" cried Stanley, with a touch of emotion unusual to him.

"Ay, sirs, do ye know him?" said the woman.

"I know a man of the name, and his manner doth well tally with your descrip-

tion; I met him first on the coast of the Irish channel."

"Ay, 'twas Philip," replied Dame Ollerenshaw; "folk say he hath left this country, and fear he will harm himself; he is used to roam o'er the country, and never long abides in a place."

"He was kindly taken home by Earl Derby," said Stanley, "and after playing his tricks upon the family, by which he had nearly got himself into prison, he suddenly disappeared from Lathom, having first raised a monstrous report of some villany he laid to my charge."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Dame Ollerenshaw. "It was one of his mad visions. He doth often, as I am told, affect to see that which is not."

"Ay, I remember he stopped us on our march to Lathom," said Stanley, "with a huge outcry, that the ground gaped to swallow him. 'Tis only this morning that I met him in the wood."

"Here?" said the Jesuit.

"Ay, hard by," replied Stanley; "and my blood was so heated with his rascally

insolence, that I drew on him. Some one, however, came between us, and I am right glad on't. I held him a cheat and a hypocrite before; now I know him for a visionary, and he is safe from my vengeance."

CHAP. XI.

I've heard that the she-bear, sooner than quit
Her cubs to the remorseless hunter's spear,
Will stand and take its steel head in her breast,
Guarding with pious love her offspring's life.
THE QUEEN'S COURTIER.

WHILST they were yet in conversation, the ears of Dame Ollerenshaw, who was alive to the slightest noise, distinguished the approach of some one toward the cottage; and she had scarcely expressed her apprehension, before it was confirmed by a modest rap at the door. It proved to be Edward Stanley's valet, Ridgway, who brought him information of the arrival of Margaret Vernon and his brother at Haddon; also, that Sir George awaited impatiently his return, as the hour of dinner was past.

"Haste thee back, then, sirrah!" said his master; "and tell Sir George he must not expect me to dinner; I shall remain

abroad. But say this privately; let not my brother, nor any one else, hear thee, on thy life. Tell the knight I have news for him: he must not make my absence a thing of import — I am hunting, fishing, sporting in some way. Thou dost hear me, Ridgway. I would not have it known I am here. Did my brother learn?"

"No," answered Ridgway; "Sir George spoke me privately."

"He did well," pursued Stanley. "Breathe not what company ye saw me in, sirrah. Fly back to the hall, and make use of thy legs and wit — Begone."

The valet vanished from the presence of his master, and the dame again closed the door.

"This is a cursed mischance," said Stanley, "that he should come so soon. I had counted on another fortnight at the least."

"Whom mean ye?" said the Jesuit.

"Why, my honey-sweet brother, taffeta Tom Stanley," replied the traitor. "Ye must now remain here, or somewhere nigh at hand. It would not be safe for ye to appear at Haddon, at least

in your present guise, whilst this sweet-scented fopling is there."

"Is he not for us?" said the German.

"He is for nought that bodes trouble or danger, though no coward," replied Edward. "We have already exchanged some hot words on this matter, wherein he condemned and entirely scouted our enterprize. The Vernon agrees with me, we had best hold him aloof from our designs. He apes the good earl in his patriotism; and if we were to confide our plot to his keeping, it is probable we might soon be assailed by the yeomen of the guard."

"Yeomen of the devil!" exclaimed the German. "It was well we did not seek him at Liverpool, as we had thought to do. But when is he likely to quit Haddon? I will not be cooped up here like a caged bird for long."

"Nay, I will procure ye better habits "than those ye wear," returned Edward; and then ye may appear in public. If ye do not betray yourselves, no one will meddle with ye. But now, sirs, if it be not too great a stretch of your endurance,

tell me how ye escaped being drowned. I saw your ship go to pieces, and concluded you were lost with her."

"Pacheco and a boat's crew of us had put off from the wreck before she parted," said the German, "and, as it happened, we gained the shore."

"The very violence of the storm saved us," said the Jesuit; "for the swell of the sea carried us over the shoals, and stranded us fairly on the sandy beach."

"And that mincing devil, Pacheco," continued Sparandam, "proposed that we should deliver ourselves direct to the authorities, afraid of worse treatment from the hands of the country people."

"Curses on the coward!" cried Stanley. "So ye gave him the slip."

"Slip! I would have given him a pash in the face, but for my comrade here," replied Sparandam. "We left him, and got over to Liverpool as fast as we could drive."

"To Liverpool!" said Stanley; "well, sirs, how sped ye there?"

"By good fortune," said the Jesuit, "we met that fond fellow you spoke to

on the pier. He is the water-bailiff: Lazarus Smalley he calls himself."

"Oh, the cur! and he sheltered ye?" said Stanley.

"Yea, he did so," replied the Jesuit. "We told him, that, having left the earl's yacht, and gone on board another ship which perished in the storm, we had come back to Liverpool, to await there the return of your father; but were unwilling to go to the tower, until he should be there himself. Our story imposed upon this half-witted officer, and he took us into his own house, where we requested to be private, as became the friends of the earl, who were unknown to the inhabitants of the town."

"But did he not press ye to see Molyneux, the governor?" said Edward.

"Aye, and to rest with him, until Earl Derby's arrival," said Sparandam; "but we were not habited to receive visits, nor to pay them; and the close-fisted villain would not lend us a tester — so all was right again. At last Master Smalley learned that the boat's crew, with Pacheco at their head, had delivered them-

selves up to the governor; and, judging from our appearance, that we were birds of a like feather, he told us what he had heard, and gave us a hint to be off. I was for driving my steel into the rascal, and stealing away, but our comrade got on the high horse, charged the water-bailiff with insolence to the friends of the Earl, and threatened him with his displeasure. But the fellow had got his head full of our being comrades of the Spaniards, and his reverence's eloquence could not beat it out. He told us, in defiance, that if we had ought to say to Earl Derby, he was at Lathom, where we might see him, and ordered us out of his house."

"The dog was plain enough at least," said Stanley. "Well, ye directed your course to Lathom —"

"Yea; but we learned at Knowsley, where we called as travellers for refreshment, "said the Jesuit, "that you had left Lathom, and were gone to Haddon; we turned our journey hitherward, and here am I, near the place of my birth, among

the hills and the valleys that I had never thought to behold again."

"And which, unless the game is to begin soon," cried the German Colonel, "I wish I had never seen at all."

"Tush, man," said Stanley; "I have not been idle since I came. I have made a proselyte of a learned Doctor, the household physician of Sir George, and we have sent him off to court."

"To court!" exclaimed Sparandam; "what the fiend is he to do there?"

"To lay our loss before the Spanish envoy," said Stanley.

"Hölle und feuer, man!" cried the German; "the envoy will know it before this. That white-livered villain, Pacheco, has blown King Philip's policy over Europe by this time: his master will soon know it, if not by report; he will be bullied with a formal embassage from Elizabeth. The proud b—tch will not pass by such an opportunity of telling the Spaniard she knows him."

"It will not harm our plot if she

does," said Stanley. "If that froth-bubble Pacheco should confess the end of his armada, he durst not betray his accomplices, or his head would go off upon his arrival in Spain. The Queen, in the heat of her proud spirit, will think the loss we have suffered able to strike a death-damp upon our embryo enterprize, and take no care about any preparation for defence. She will be too busy in adjusting the big words of her defiance to the Spaniard, to take any note of the pigmy rebellion, which she will deem to be cut off in the bud of its treason."

"Yea; but will not the Queen cause a rigorous inquisition into the facts that have occurred?" said the Jesuit. "It will easily be discovered that we came to Liverpool with you; that we remained at the town a night; that we sailed with Earl Derby towards his island of Man: afterwards, by our own confession to the water-bailiff, that we were on board the ship of Pacheco. I fear we did wrong in making that confession."

"Tush, man; fear nothing," cried Edward Stanley! "though Smalley is a knave,

not to be trusted by common persons, any man of my name might put his life in his hands, and safely too, — for his own life would be a pledge for our safety. If he were to betray us, he would be rent limb from limb by the very rabble of the shores. And you are equally safe by your association with me: they cannot strike at either of ye without wounding me, and that they will not do, be sure."

"I marvel, Ned Stanley," said the Colonel, "if thou art so reverenced, wherefore that knave bade us to quit his house so peremptorily."

"'Tis likely he was even then doing ye service," said his companion; "for if Molyneux had got any scent of ye from the dog Pacheco,— of which Lazarus, as one of the town-officers, would soon be informed — he served ye well by frighting ye away."

"Why did he not tell us plainly of our danger?" said the German: "we should have quitted his hovel quite as speedily."

"Seest thou not?" returned Stanley; "would he not have made himself accessary to your treason, and drawn himself

into a scrape when it could serve no purpose? Marry, sirs! Lazarus Smalley is a man of morality, and will commit no perjury, save in the way of his calling; how then could he have answered, if he had been sworn to deliver the truth, and professed to be ignorant of ye, when he had advertised ye confidentially of your danger? The bailiff hath acted warily, i'faith."

"And so must ye, sirs, if ye would be safe," said Dame Ollerenshaw; "and while ye are in this poor homestead, let no word pass your lips of your work. My husband and my children are not to be trusted; Gilbert or Anak, though the last is none so bad, would barter their very souls for a golden noble."

"And who is this hot spirit of a fellow," said Edward Stanley, "that ye call the Outlaw? Is he in faith a man of gentle blood?"

"I trow he is," replied the woman; "but I cannot, and I will not say more of him: he has a soul too high, and bold, and generous, for aught less. The queen upon her throne, that should not sit there

by right, has not a hand more open than this kindly outlaw."

"What makes him ever in the park?" said Stanley.

"It is his humour," answered the dame shrewdly, "as they say yours is, to be ever in strife and battles."

"Who told ye this, Goody?" said Stanley with a smile.

"Marry, I've e'en heard himself say so; — this very outlaw," replied the dame; "and I'll be sworn that he would not belie ye."

"Then it seems he knows me?" returned the Soldier.

"Did he not call ye by name, when he held your hand from striking the lad Anak," said the woman, "and tell ye he was no match for a man skilled in swordmanship as you are?"

"He that has heard of my name," said Stanley, proudly, "has heardof the deeds that blazoned it; I had no memory of the fellow's countenance."

"Is he of our party?" said Sparandum.

"I know not if he be of any party," replied the dame.

"By Sanct Peter and Sanct Paul," cried the German, "if he be a man of gentle blood, he must be for us or against us."

"At present," said the Jesuit, "it were not wise to put any man upon proof, unless we were assured he would side with us."

"And I would not side with him if he were so minded," returned Stanley: "the man is my foe."

"Surely it is not for saving my boy's life," said Dame Ollerenshaw; "ye bear no feud to him on that account, sir: he did nought but what any man had done that bore any touch of spirit or generosity."

"I tell ye, woman," said the vengeful Soldier, "he hath thrust himself upon me more than once, and by intruding his weapon between me and my captive, robbed me of that high power of showing mercy which is the right,— the proud right of a conqueror."

"But your sword was up," cried the woman; "there was no time for courtesies. You would have shown Anak Onshaw no whit of mercy; you would

have slain him outright on his own hearth-stone."

"Thou dost not know me, Goody," returned Stanley with a softening smile; "my sword is as well governed by my hand, as an Arab's horse is managed by his master. The savage can ride his courser against the spears of his comrades, and curb him within a hair's breadth of their points; so I can guide my steel to the very breast of my foe, and make his life the dearer to him, as he has been the nearer the line of his fate."

"It is easy to say what one could do, Master Stanley," returned the dame: "doubtless the will only was wanting. But be this as it may, I beseech ye, let your revenge sleep; and in place of bandying private feuds and personal quarrels, bend your daring soul to the work ye have in hand; it will find ye opportunities enow of showing your courage."

"If you will answer me but one question, Goody," said Edward Stanley, "I will excuse this gentleman his insolence."

"I must know your question first," replied the dame; "when I know it, I

will tell ye whether I will answer it or no."

"Hath this Outlaw ever spoken to the Lady Dorothy Vernon on the subject of love?" said Stanley.

"Go to! get ye hence," cried the woman, retiring to her chair in the chimney-nook, and waving her hand with indignation; "ye want to baffle me into a confession of the youth's secrets, when I know nought of him. How, think ye, should I know if he has ever spoken to Lady Dorothy of love, or spoke to her at all? Is it likely he would tell me, an old, sour and melancholy creature, that hath no ear for dalliance and pleasure, but rather for death and doom? Go to! away with ye."

"Nay, but, Goody," said Stanley, who perceived the dame knew more than she would divulge—

"I tell ye I have said all I will say of him," cried she stubbornly; "I will not breathe his name again from my lips. His kindness to us, who have lived upon his alms, would be well rewarded if I were to say aught against him! But I cannot;

I know nought: the man's a stranger to me; and I would not if I could."

"But, perhaps, I might do more for your family than he has done," said Stanley: "there are offices in Earl Derby's household, that would fit both Rose and her brother."

"Ay, so there may — and so there may," cried the dame, rising from her seat, and impassioned almost to tears; "but I would rather see them ragged as an ass's colt, and as lean withal, than have them decked out and pampered at the price of their mother's treachery. Ye cannot tempt me; your father's earldom would fail of value to do it."

"Why then the curse of poverty rest upon thy stubborn folly!" said Stanley; "but see that thou do not betray my inquiries to this fellow, or my word, that I interposed for him to Sir George Vernon, shall be withdrawn, and I will hunt him out of the country with a pack of dogs."

"Nay, fear not," replied Dame Ollerenshaw, wiping her eyes; "I will never come between ye: I am no tale-bearer.

Poverty has ever been my lot, and I will not mend it by the sale of blood."

She again sat down, her eyes filled with tears; her lips and her knees shook with emotion; and she seemed to be filled with a violent apprehension, lest that little which she had said of her mysterious inmate should have been of disservice to him. After sitting a short time, she rose up, and advancing to the very front of Edward Stanley, she raised her arm, with the fore-finger extended, and said in a fierce tone, "Thou wilt not say, proud Soldier, that I have betrayed this youth; thou canst not, in verity, say I have said aught of his name or business. I defy thee to accuse me rightfully. The Virgin knows I love him as my own son, although until he came hither I knew nought of him, good or bad; and I would preserve his safety as dear as I would my own faith."

"Be pacified, Constance," said the Jesuit, who feared the consequences of his sister's insulting manner to Stanley, who stood before her, smiling scornfully: "you mistake Master Stanley; he but

asks ye these questions for the sake of our divine cause, not for any profit of his own — be calm, I intreat ye."

"Profit of his own!" exclaimed the woman, tauntingly; "yea, sirs, it is his own profit that forced him upon asking me these questions. Have I not heard — has not every habitant of the Peak heard, that Master Edward Stanley is to marry the Lady Dorothy Vernon? It is the will of her father at least. And is he not seen daily riding at the stirrup of the fair damsel, or at her side when she is afoot?"

"Mein lebensblut," cried the German; "I am glad on't. Ned Stanley, I give thee joy of thy fortune. When is thy brauttag?* Is't fixed? I will be thy brautvater: we will have such a revel at thy marriage, as hath not been in Haddon for five score of years."

"So ye may when he's married;" said the woman; "but there flies no bird that shall see that day, though it be the owl, that ages a hundred years."

* Wedding-day.

Stanley, though a good deal moved at this insinuation of Dame Ollerenshaw, which betrayed her knowledge of some obstacle to his desires that she would gladly conceal, if her vanity would have allowed her, and which he did not doubt was some kind of intercourse that subsisted between the Outlaw and Dorothy Vernon; instead of betraying his apprehension of her deeper knowledge, affected to consider what she had spoken as the mere result of her own opinion; and, smiling, shook his head, as if he was satisfied with the foundation of his hopes. This artful conduct effectually served his purpose; for the dame, though one of the most clear-sighted persons existing, when not blinded by her passions, fancied he slighted her opinion, and, piqued with this idea, she continued —

"Ay, sir, and I can wag my head, and I can smile; and there be those that can tell ye more than ye know, wise as ye are, and brave. But if you are married this time twelve-month to the Lady Dorothy

Vernon, my heart shall melt through my bones at the fiery stake."

"Your heart shall be sound and whole, Goody," said Stanley, patting her on the shoulder, "'bating your death by other chances; and yet I will be married this day month, and to Dorothy Vernon."

"How did the Scots King go to battle at Flodden?" said the dame, with a sneer, "I wot he ne'er dreamt of rout and death; and what met him, fair sirs? — both, or I'm deceived."

"Ay, dame," said Stanley, with a still smiling countenance; "but I am an Englishman, and shall have English fortune; and I shall have my own withal, that hath never failed me. The chances, too, were against King James; and they are in my favour."

"I am no spell-woman," said Dame Ollerenshaw, "and ill doth it become any one to make practice of unravelling fortunes; but this I will say, Sir Cavalier, when thy fortune is at the flood, it will be dashed from thy lips; and instead of

quaffing the rich draught of intoxicating pleasure, thou wilt feel in thy mouth the dregs of disappointment — the lees of despair, and shame, and ruin! Start not, noble sir; ye have dared me to this prophecy."

"I started not for fear, good dame," returned the Soldier, grasping her hand, to show that he did not tremble; "thou mayst prophecy till this time to-morrow, and make me thy subject for death and doom, steel or halter, fire and faggot — I am content."

"Nay, nay, — by Sanct Chrysostom, we'll have no fiend's tricks here," cried the German, who was a true believer in witchcraft; "so doff thy devil's gear. Quit thy burning and blasting, or I'll forget thou art our friend, and poniard thee on the spot."

He threw open his cloak, and laid his hand upon his dagger; but Stanley instantly stepped between them, and said, "Nay, Sparandum, let us have no flourishing against a woman."

"A woman!" exclaimed the Colonel;

" she's a witch, a d——d leaguer fiend of the devil !"

" If I be," cried the woman, fiercely, " it is by leaguing with thee."

" Constance, be at peace," said the Jesuit, to whose sober and restrained mind this furious scene was particularly disgusting. " Colonel Sparandum, I crave your pardon ; but we have work in hand of too much import, to allow us time for scolding with ancient women."

" Ancient women ! you mean a villanous nachteule," cried the German, with great vehemence ; " a yelling, skurking jade, that hath a mind to plague us with her witchery and zauberkraft."

" She plagues not thee, Sparandum," said Edward Stanley ; " and I am too well fortified against her incantations to fear them. But I tell thee, dame, and in earnest, though not in anger, that though Dorothy Vernon, like a romantic fool, shall have listened to the vows of this vagabond knight, I will make her mine within this month. Thou saidst well, that her father will have her so ;

and what woman, save her nerves were steel or iron, could bear up against the will of such a father ?"

" Measure not the courage of Dorothy Vernon by the mildness of her spirit," said the woman, — " rather by thine own, when thy heart is quiet from contempt of thine adversary. Perhaps thou knowest more of her sister, the gay Margaret; and she hath mettle, like her father's, as hot as may be: but their souls are of the same temper, the fires are of the same heat; but Margaret's lies nearer the surface."

" I'm right glad on't," said Stanley, laughing; "for my wife's fire will keep me warm. I have no mind to be frozen to death; and 'faith, I prefer a woman, though she be the fiercest shrew that ever the world saw, to the handsomest marble goddess that ever was fashioned by the chisel of the statuary."

" Ha! you seem sure," said Dame Ollerenshaw.

" I am so, Goody," cried Stanley, " beyond the power of disappointment; I never fly at game that I cannot strike.

I have forecasted my distance, and the prey is within my swoop."

"It will 'scape ye yet," returned the woman; "and though I am leagued with ye on a cause dear to my heart, I pray the Virgin you may never prosper in this suit."

"Thou wilt not seek to cross me," said Stanley, whose look of gaiety changed into one of earnest and severe resolution. "Now, woman, I am thy brother's sworn friend: he is here under my protection; and for his sake will I pass over whatever of scorn or malignancy hath escaped thee. But if I find thou dost intermeddle, except it be to favour me, but the extreme horizon of a shadow; if by action or word, sign or circumstance, thou dost injure me in my love; — as I hope to thrive — but, I will not threaten thee."

"Nay, Sir, but go on," returned the dame, whose muscles, strongly touched by the severity of Stanley, threw her hideous countenance into a variety of contortions, more than usually horrible: "go on, — let me hear ye out, — let me

know what I am to suffer; for assuredly, whenever your interest is matched by my sweet lady's, I shall help her, if I have power, though I leave you to rot."

"Curses rot thee!" muttered the desperate Soldier, while his hand involuntarily fumbled his breast for his dagger-hilt.

"Thine are powerless, young man," returned the woman, whose acute sense of hearing had detected the reckless expressions of Edward Stanley, although they were pronounced in an under tone. She continued, "I am safe from the curse of the wicked, for I have not shed innocent blood."

"Vile witch!" bawled Stanley, "say'st thou I am a murderer?"

"No," replied the dame; "nor a robber and plunderer, nor a committer of sacrilege, nor a fierce brawler and ruffian, nor a ravisher."

"Ha! d——n thee, sorceress!" cried the traitor, plucking his dagger from his girdle, and griping the woman by the throat; "who told thee that shameless lie? Speak, or I will murder thee, fiend

as thou art, and though the whole race of the damned rise up to rescue thee."

The woman, whose accidental taunt had thus conjured up the guilty fiend in the heart of her companion, was, notwithstanding her natural firmness, overawed and terror-struck at his furious action; and sank down upon her knees, with her hands uplifted before him, in the attitude of supplication, unable to utter one word of apology, or even to beg his mercy. But the Jesuit and Sparandum, touched with her miserable state interposed between them, and the Soldier himself, when the first burst of his passion had evaporated, sheathed his poniard, with a smile of contempt and said, "I pray ye, pardon me, gentle sirs,—you 'specially, holy father, — for what might seem harsh unto your kinswoman. But a fierce dream had beguiled my brain: come, Goody, rise; the tornado is past, and fair weather smiles again. Here is for thee, as a token that I hold ye in no unkindness—"

He offered her several pieces of gold;

but the Jesuit put them by, and said, "Nay, sir, it needs not. I have money in store; and when it is done, the Spanish Envoy will supply me: — put up, I pray ye."

"As ye like," said Stanley, replacing his purse in his pocket; "but it was not for the money's worth — we are friends, good dame."

"Ay, ay, friends," replied the woman in a low tone, and without raising her head; "we know each other."

"True; I must now begone," said Stanley: "I shall be waited for—"

"Let us be held in thy remembrance, Ned Stanley," said Sparandam; "and send us some clothes, that we may join ye in better quarters—if thou dost clothe me as a Jesuit, and the holy father as oberstallmeister."

Stanley nodded; and adjusting his beaver, left the cottage.

CHAP. XII.

Cel. I found him under a tree, like a dropp'd acorn.
AS YOU LIKE IT.

THE reveries of Edward Stanley, as he returned through the park to Haddon, were of a complexion scarcely more pleasant than those which agitated his restless soul before he arrived at the cottage of Ollerenshaw. He easily detected through the shallow veil which the wife of the woodman had spread over her knowledge, the sure and indubitable fact that an intercourse of a highly interesting, and, to his hopes, alarming nature, had for some time subsisted between Dorothy Vernon and the Outlaw, whose handsome figure and deportment he could not refrain from recollecting with some twinges of apprehension. We will not assert that he was jealous, for he had no sentiment of love

towards Dorothy Vernon; but he was fearful that the Outlaw might in the end turn out to be some man of family, who, having his own reasons for cloaking himself in obscurity, endeavoured to gain the heart and person of his mistress, without any regard to fortune or the will of her father. And if, indeed, an elopement should take place, and the husband of the Lady Dorothy should prove of ancient birth and a noble strain, as his very person and manners seemed to declare, it was barely possible that Sir George Vernon would persist in refusing a reconciliation; but, at all events, she would be then lost to him, and, that which was of more consequence, her large dowry. His first resolution, therefore, was to watch carefully for some actual evidence of personal intercourse between the lovers; which he did not doubt but he should detect, as it was not possible for any man, much less an anonymous Outlaw, to raise a passion in the breast of a lovely, noble, and accomplished woman, by the mere strength of visual perception, or the description of his person given by others. And he was,

from observation, pretty sure, unless Father John acted the part of Pandarus between this Troilus and Cressida, which his near relationship to the Vernons rendered improbable, that Dorothy could have no interview with her lover in the day time; for had he appeared on the outer side of the walls, for the purpose of conversing with his mistress, he could not only have been seen by the servants and labourers, who were constantly about the gardens, the courts, and the park, but he would also have run the chance of being detected from the castle itself: and, indeed, the Outlaw was so constantly seen in the day-time in parts of the park far distant from the hall, that Stanley concluded, at once, that the hour of assignation was in the dead of night. Such a time, too, was more agreeable to the cast of romance, of which such an amour would savour, than the gaudy glare of day.

"Ay, let this Leander swim the Wye 'stead o'the Hellespont," said Stanley to himself, with great bitterness, as he thus concluded—"It will please his

classical mistress. I would some water-fiend would hale him down into the depth; but what need I a fiend's help? Is not my own arm a surer and stauncher aid? I will slay him; and our Sappho shall weep the death, 'stead of the absence of her Phaon."

The coming of Sparandum and the Jesuit, both of whom would be ready to assist him in his task of watchfulness, was peculiarly fortunate; and he resolved without delay to mention their arrival to Sir George Vernon, and to procure his invitation that they would take up their abode in the hall, whilst he himself stayed there; and it was also his intention, if circumstances favouring his expectation fell out, to let the Knight of Haddon into the secret of his daughter's amour, so that he might profit by any sudden and violent resolution which the Knight should make regarding his daughter's future disposition. Neither could he be thought by Sir George to act with unbecoming or officious curiosity, in thus prying into the circumstances of the Lady Dorothy, whose acknowledged suitor, as far as re-

garded the paternal sanction, he was already; and as reports were afloat which ascribed to the beautiful Dorothy the erratic life of the Outlaw, Edward Stanley was excused in taking every opportunity of satisfying himself that he was not forestalled in her affections. Such were the excuses which this artful intriguant prepared to offer to the Knight of Haddon, in case he should express any surprize at the steps which should be taken to make the discovery. Stanley was well aware, that if at this moment, such a scene was exhibited to Sir George, as that of his daughter in personal communication with a male stranger at such an hour, the Knight, instead of interposing to save the life of the Outlaw, would in his rage be the first man to plant a dagger in his breast. Insulted honour, pride, indignation, and blind fury, would all incite him to the most deadly vengeance; and so fierce and ungovernable was he in his hours of passion, although in general a man of boundless generosity, that Stanley did not doubt of receiving the hand of the Lady Dorothy, the very hour her as-

signation was betrayed to her father. He did not, for a moment, contemplate any resistance on the part of the maiden, for he knew that the anger of the Vernon was so much dreaded by every one, so feared and deprecated, that it was held by all persons within the Peak madness to contend with him.

Satisfied with this outline of his hopes, he resolved to sacrifice all other considerations to that of his love-suit; but he possessed too much of that warlike spirit which constitutes the hero, to allow one to suppose that he suffered the scale of his ambition to kick the beam against that of his sordid interest. The eager thirst of triumph was, indeed, visible in the promptitude and pertinacity which pushed him on in this contest. His vanity was ruffled, his pride assailed by finding his suit to this mistress checked by a rival, and particularly by one who affected no signs of that rank which befitted him to contest such a prize against such a competitor. That he, a youth of handsome person and of a demeanour highly engaging, when he chose to assume a gentle

character; of high birth, and of a reputation in arms surpassing that of any man of his own years in that military age, should fail against a rival whose person and manners were, to him at least, his sole reliance, was a humiliation not to be endured. That he might be noble was probable, though he did not now enjoy those advantages of dress and attendants, nor appear in that eclat which frequently of itself captivates the female heart. But he knew that Dorothy Vernon possessed a mind whose sober and manly cultivation, and whose retiring modesty wholly undervalued such advantages; and if she was assured that her lover was the man of birth that Stanley supposed, she would doubtless rest content without his assuming the badges of his rank.

"But what moves him, if he be noble," said Stanley, as he drew nigh to the towers, upon the highest of which he could perceive the two sisters, "to skulk by day in these woods, and by night in yon vile hovel? I know of no man of name an outlaw, in fact; and yet there must be some reason for his not proffer-

ing himself openly as the suitor of Dorothy Vernon — perhaps a feud between their houses, or difference of party or faith, or want of means — ha! by my faith, he is yonder beneath a tree gazing at his mistress in the true style of your sylvan lover. Now might I take this knight of romance upon the sudden and slay him, surely; the deed were done, and his body sunk in the water, where nought but fish could find him, and no one might lay aught to my charge. But I will not play the coward for the first time. Down, thou fiend of dishonour."

With a cautious step he approached his rival, who, wrapped in meditation upon his mistress, on whom his ardent gaze was now fixed, did not perceive his advance. He stood beneath a large elm tree at the distance of two hundred paces from the Hall, with one foot rested upon its tangled and fantastic roots, and with his right arm, which was placed against the trunk, supporting his head. The feathers of his hat drooped upon his shoulder and concealed the greater part

of his face from Edward Stanley; but the latter could not behold his manly but elegant form, and the graceful adjustment of his simple forester's dress, without envy and detestation. He stopped short a few paces from the Outlaw, desirous of detecting some sign of communication between him and Dorothy Vernon; but, if she had observed her lover, she was too cautious to evince any recognition of him; and though it was plain enough that the Outlaw beheld his mistress, yet the only sign of his being aware of it was the intent look he fixed upon the tower. The foliage of the trees, which were thickly planted in this spot, sufficiently concealed him from general observation; but it was probable he would not have approached so nigh the hall, had he not heard of Sir George Vernon's late direction to the keepers, commanding that he should not be molested.

Finding that the cogitations of his rival were likely to be of some continuance, Edward Stanley advanced close to him, and with a gentle blow on the shoulder, cried, "Ho, Sir Outlaw, what

have ye done with that mad-brained fanatic, Ashby?"

The stranger turned round at this familiar application, and looked upon Stanley, but made no reply.

"What!" continued the Soldier; "thou hast been dreaming of a saint, and now thou dost fancy the devil hath marred thy pleasure."

"If thou art not the devil, Stanley," replied the Outlaw, with the like familiarity, "thou art a devilish impudent fellow. Thy peer is not to be found in the Tennis-court or Bear-garden."

"Can the swains of Arcadia talk of the Bear-garden?" said Stanley, with a sneer; "I thought they were all simplicity; that their pleasures were unsophisticated, and their loves as pure as those of angels. But it seems the follies of this vicious world will sometimes break in upon guileless hearts."

"It were well for you, sir," returned the stranger, "if you shared a portion of this simplicity. The deeds I have seen you attempt savour little of innocence or honour."

"Honour, quotha!" continued the

Soldier with a sarcastic laugh; "how high does thy honour reach? canst measure it? is it as high as this tree under which thou hast been playing the satyr, and peeping at yonder nymphs? or is't as broad as the Wye in which, Narcissus like, I trow thou dost survey thine exquisite face? Canst grasp thy honour in thy hand, or stuff it into thy pocket? — Honour in an outlaw!"

"Wert thou armed I would tell thee, Stanley, I wear my honour in my scabbard," said the stranger; "and though I confess it hath not so wide, and so bloody a name as thine, though I am no genius of carnage."

"Ha, hell seize thee!" shouted Stanley, laying his hand on his dagger; "I will tell thee, miscreant."

"Rest quiet, sir," replied the stranger, with a calm smile, "I am armed above your match; at present I will take, at least, I will resent no offence."

"Thou resent!" continued Stanley, in the same desperate ironical mood; "thou art the veriest daw my eyes were ever curst withal; a lamb without gall, a

lion filled with a honey-comb stead of a heart, a gallant mould informed by a villain spirit. I would fight with thee, though I brandished no weapon against thy rapier but a bullrush from the river; — thou resent! thou mayest resent the fisticuff of a clown, or a broken head when thou dost catch one from his quarter-staff; but if thou dost not throw by that gentle steel by thy side, I will draw thy belt over thy ears, and break the weapon above thy head."

With that contemptuous spirit for which Edward Stanley was remarkable, he seized the outlaw by the throat, with the intention of making good his degrading threat, but his adversary received his impetuous attack with the same unbroken firmness which he had constantly displayed, and being a man of much greater strength than his rival, held him as fast, at arm's length, as if he had been bound to the spot.

"Your life, sir," said the Outlaw, calmly, "is in my hands, and it is well for you, despite your gallantry, that I am not now in the humour to take it."

"My life in thy hands, rascal!" cried the Soldier, breaking from the grasp of his adversary with a violent effort, and plucking out his dagger; "if thou art what thou dost profess to be, — a man of blood and courage, — throw down thy sword, and come to the dagger-stroke. — 'Tis the way of duel in France, where, 'tis like, thou hast been."

"It is a way of settling disputes, sir," replied the Outlaw, "which I am proud to say, has never disgraced my countrymen. I wear no dagger."

"Then break thy sword to my dagger's length," cried the desperate ruffian; "and if thou fearest I shall have more point than thou, give me thy weapon, and take thou mine."

"The matter is none so pressing," returned the stranger; "besides, I have no skill in the use of such a murtherous instrument."

"By my life's blood," cried Stanley, "I do thee too much grace; thou art unworthy to combat with me, — a fellow as destitute of courage as of reputation."

"Whatever be my courage, sir, of

which I will some time give you proof," said his rival, "I thank Heaven that I am without such reputation as yours. The world may count it to thee for honour to be the most savage soldier that ever disgraced the annals of warfare; but thy career must damn thee in the opinion of every good man."

"Let me be damn'd then in the opinion of such good men as thou art," said Stanley; "the world will not count it to me for dishonour."

"At least that part of it, the mad and brainless fools that gape at all things extraordinary, though even in evil," said the stranger. "They will still stand by thee, and the more brutal and inhuman thou art, the more devilish and sanguinary is thy course, the more will they applaud and resound thy praises. Do but show a frantic valour, an insensible fierceness, and hedge it round with the slaughter of a thousand of thy brethren, and the Christian mob will cry thee up for a miracle of virtue, — a compound of all that is great and good in human nature."

"Peace hath commonly its apology from a coward," said Stanley; "war his anathema. But before I will chop my battle sword into a pruning hook, may I go upon crutches, and sell sticks to the learned apprentices at the pervis."

"Thou hadst better do so," replied the Outlaw, "than sell thy soul to hell for the lust of a blood-stained glory."

"I would I knew thy name," said Stanley, with a glance of bitter contempt, "that if thou art indeed noble, I might call upon the shades of thy forefathers to witness the morality of their craven descendant. — Bloodstained glory, thou heartless man! Why, is not the fame of every conqueror dashed with blood? Is not Alexander's, Cæsar's, Martel's, Cœur de Lion's fame, — the fame of all those heroes whose achievements are blazoned on the records of immortality, written in characters of blood, — characters which shall not perish, until that blood of which they were so prodigal shall have ceased to warm the bodies of posterity? And what man but thou, dead to the glory of thy

country, can think upon the deeds of our Plantagenets, without feeling his heart leap with exultation? Didst ever hear of my kinsman, Sir Edward Stanley, who fought at Flodden, and by his valour won that field? I swear to thee, that the remembrance of his deeds that day hath proved better worth to England in my single person than a thousand men. Spurred on by my kinsman's chivalry, I have ventured on actions that thou couldst not look on, though safe and distant, without fear and trembling; and my comrades in arms, ashamed to be outdone, performed feats worthy of immortal story."

"Thy kinsman was a patriot as well as a soldier," said the Outlaw. "He differed in that from thee: it was to repel an invasion of his country, not to carry fire and sword into a distant one, that he fought so nobly."

"Think ye that Flodden field bounded his exploits?" said Stanley. "He was a comet that blazed to the eyes of all Europe."

"His name, then, would have been

more respectable," said the Outlaw, "if Flodden had been the first and the last of his fields."

"If it had been the first," cried the Soldier, "it would have been the worse for England. No raw soldier might have won that field."

"Ay, but there were many men of courage and experience in the English army," returned the Outlaw; "and, I trust, we should have won the battle, though your gallant kinsman had not been there."

"No man but a Stanley could have achieved the deeds Lord Mounteagle did that day," said Edward Stanley, proudly.

"Tush, man," returned his rival; "Stanley is a gallant name, but there are many as good in the peerage of England."

"Not one, by Heaven!" cried Stanley; Percy's moon's on the wane."

"Or as Percy," cried the Outlaw "There are men as noble, as virtuous, and as valiant as any man of your house, or of Northumberland's."

"There is no man that stands so nigh the crown as Earl Derby," said Stanley, with unusual indiscretion; "and there is no man that so well deserves it."

"Ha, the crown!" said the stranger, with marked surprize; — "the crown, indeed!"

"The crown, indeed!" echoed Stanley, with a keen glance which discovered to the stranger that he had seen his error, and was eager to learn what impression it had made upon his companion; "ay, the crown, indeed; what ghost seest thou in that? I say, Earl Derby stands nigher to the crown than any other subject, and touching his merit and his nobility, doth better deserve to wear it. I trow I am mistaken in thee, good fellow, thou art a courtier; and my freedom of speech doth offend thy loyalty."

"Freedom of speech among men met as we are," said the Outlaw, "can give no offence; — but I am no courtier."

"I could have sworn thou hadst been," replied Stanley, with a look of contempt; "and not so much by thy tender allegiance and squeamish loyalty as by thy

holiday speech, thy patience of injuries, and thy sobriety of humour. I'faith, Master Outlaw, it is pity but thou wert married; for thou hast all the requisites of a cuckold in admirable perfection; and I see thou hast come hither to curry acquaintance with the horned folk, for the more familiarity with thy state when thou shalt come to it: wait with patience, and I'll be sworn thou wilt in time attain thy degrees."

"I can bear more now," replied the stranger, retorting the contempt of his rival, "than even thy villanous wit can lay upon me. But I tell thee, for as bold as thou art, Sir Cavalier, there shall not one word of thine fall to the ground: I will hoard thine insolence in my memory, and when time serves, repay it thee with use."

"Thou art over honest for a strict usurer," returned the Soldier; "but, I pray thee, do not take a long day, like some of our gallants, who wittingly neglect the reckoning, till remembrance grows stale. It may be villanous wit in them, but in thee it will seem cowardice."

"I will prove to thee I am no coward," said the Outlaw.

"Thou may'st withhold thy trouble, man," said Stanley, assuming at once an earnest and serious countenance; "for I do not take thee for one. I guess thee to be of noble birth, as thou art of a bold strain, else had I not played the advocate with the Vernon for thy safety."

And if thou did'st, I am beholden to thy courtesy," answered the stranger; "but I could have trusted my own sword with my freedom."

"I did it out of no courtesy, Sir Outlaw, to thee," returned Stanley, "but as a means of winning favour with thy mistress; thou shalt go free until with my single hand I bring thee a prisoner to Haddon. I will shame the fair Dorothy out of her love to thee, and bind it firmly to myself."

"The Lady Dorothy!" exclaimed the Outlaw, with an air of surprise.

"Why, man," returned Stanley, "thou dost not hold me for such a fool as to mistake this matter, if the whole country be wrong. It is not Margaret Vernon

that is thy goddess, for she is Thomas Stanley's ; and thou art not here to take note of yon walls alone, — no, it is the fair, the modest, the learned Dorothy, the romantic maid, the Arcadian nymph, that loves with Plato, and prefers sentiment to pleasure. She would have thee an Endymion, and play the Diana, — nought but cold looks and frozen embraces to cool thy fires withal ; — by Saint Bride this will not do for me."

" You beat the bushes, but will find no game," said the Outlaw. " Whatever my business may be within Haddon park, be sure I will let no one know it against my will — if you will have it that I aim at either of the Vernon's fair daughters, with all my soul rest in that opinion ; I will spend no word in setting you right, for the matter is of small import."

" Yea, but it is of mighty import both to you and me, Sir Outlaw," returned his rival ; " for if thou dost win thy prize, it will cross me in a point that will not brook opposition. But thou mayest save both blood and trouble if thou art not indeed her lover. Give me thy word

of honour that thou dost not affect her, and I will pledge mine that, be thou who thou may'st, the Vernon shall not only hold thee safely, but, if thou wilt, receive thee as a friend right courteously."

"Thou dost but play thy wit upon me now," replied the Outlaw, "perhaps with the intent of stealing into my secret: by my faith, sir, this is scarcely honourable."

"Nay, curse thy secret, let it rot," answered the fierce Soldier. "I want to know my ground, and whether thou art friend or foe."

"As thou art minded I am one or the other," answered the stranger; "but I will not speak further on this matter."

"Thou wilt not!" cried Stanley in a rage, "then, by my troth, I will hold thee for a dear enemy,—a foe that upon plain terms I will slaughter where I can:—look to it, from this moment there is no peace between us. I dare thee now to take the vantage of thy weapon, for if I meet thee, and our lot be changed, I will slay thee like a dog."

"Thou canst not move me to dishonour," replied the Outlaw. "I would

not be thy executioner, but thy conqueror."

"Well, peace be with thee for this time," cried Stanley; "but remember, thou dost bear my challenge."

"I will bear nothing of thine," replied the stranger. "If thou dost set upon me, thou wilt find me armed; if thou dost use foul means, the dishonour be on thy head."

"Nay, I will seek thee with my good sword," said Stanley, "and with no other weapon. Thou hadst best take thy last look of thy mistress betimes, for when we meet again, thy doom is sealed."

"Thou art an insolent boaster," said the Outlaw with a smile; "the fate of our arbitrament is not in thy hands. Thou mayst have to beg thy life from me, proud as thou art."

The spirit of the soldier rose to his brow as his rival uttered these words, and he grasped the hilt of his dagger as if he meditated an assault upon the outlaw, who stood upon his guard; but he suffered his rage to evaporate, and with a fierce stare replied, "Fare thee well,

Sir Outlaw ; I will hold myself disgraced until I see thee again, until I strike my sword upon thy bloody breast, and thy tongue, which hath wagged so rudely does lie as quiet as thy blade does now within its scabbard. I bid ye farewell, sir."

With a countenance in which anger and contempt were mingled, Edward Stanley left his rival, and proceeded to the Hall. Like a rude mountain stream, which foams, and bubbles, and dashes impetuously over the rocks which obstruct its course, the mind of this arch traitor, enraged at the opposition which seemed likely to check his schemes, lashed itself into fury, and threatened to overwhelm all objects that came within the flood of its excitation. And to such a height of anger had his conference with the outlaw raised him, so much had it overcome his usual composure of spirit, and thrown his mind off its balance, that he was obliged to take a few turns in the garden before he went into the company of Sir George and his friends.

It was very rarely that any event, how-

ever much conflicting with his interest or passions, had power thus to disturb the callosity of his heart, or to deprive him for a moment of that power which he possessed of masking his feelings with an appearance of bold and sarcastic humour. This power did, however, for the present forsake him, and he entered the Hall, after attempting, in vain, to rally his spirit, with a countenance darkened by rage, and depressed with moodiness.

CHAP. XIII.

Stanley! what news with you?

RICHARD III.

DINNER had been over a considerable time before the arrival of Edward Stanley; and the Knight of Haddon, his family, and guests were assembled in Sir George's parlour to drink wine and eat sweetmeats. They were in high glee at some quaint expression or novel hypothesis which had fallen from Sir Simon Degge, as Stanley entered the room; but the sight of his dark and lowering brow chilled their mirth, and like a frost that nips the blossom of the year, his presence in a moment destroyed the fecundity of their pleasure. Every eye was turned upon him, so much was his manner changed; but to the repeated enquiries of Sir Simon Degge where he had been, he re-

turned no answer; and after formally saluting the Lady Margaret and his brother, he seated himself by Sir George, and pouring out a horn of wine, quaffed it to the dregs.

"Marry, well done," said Sir Simon Degge, "that's a deep draught;—*iterum bibe*—'twill do thee good."

"What, Sir Simon," said Margaret Vernon, "do you say that deep drinking is proper?"

"Yea; Bacchus hath had his votaries ever since he was a god," replied the Knight. "The Greeks in their *symposia*, their *compotationes et concœnationes*, and the Romans in their *convivia*, and their *accubationes epulares* or reclining banquets. By the way, how pleasant it was for the most illustrious men of the most illustrious times to have met at these *symposia*, and discussed the interminable systems of philosophy that were then afloat: and then in the merry time of that cadaverous-visaged knave, Horace, what sport to have become a good subject of their *regna vini!* Marry, I should have made a better *arbiter bi-*

bendi than Verres, — a stouter *convivii præfectus* than Nero. I was about to say that the ancients were —"

"Curse the ancients!" cried Sir George. "Thou art ever raking up the ashes of past ages."

"Yea, *vivo moribus præteritis*," replied the Knight; "their ashes, forsooth, were better than our raw sea-coal."

"But I never heard that you were a hard drinker, Sir Simon," said the Knight of Haddon.

"Hard drinker!" exclaimed the Knight; "Heaven forbid! Unless *symposia et convivia* become naturalized in England, I am not like *Græco more bibere*."

"Ned Stanley, where is your sword?" said his brother, suddenly perceiving that he was without that gentlemanly appendage.

"Ay, you wore one when you left us this morning," said Sir George Vernon.

"Yea, marry, I'll avouch he did," cried Sir Simon; "for I was comparing

his partridge spit, as it is fit for nought else, with mine own weapon of service."

The brow of Edward Stanley, when thus pressed, grew darker than before, and he looked first upon one and then the other of his querists with great impatience; but finding that neither his brother nor Sir George Vernon were satisfied with his silence, he affected a smiling air, though with an ill grace, and replied, — "If ye would know what has become of my rapier, ye must ask that pretty damsel, Rose Ollerenshaw, for it. I saw it last in her hands. I will commission you, Sir Simon Degge, to walk to her father's cottage, and enquire of her the fate of my sword."

"Nay, by the mass," answered Sir Simon, whose curiosity was completely checked, "I care nought about the matter; — thou hast more to do with swords than I have, — prithee go thyself."

"But on what occasion," said Sir George, "did the wench get at thy sword?"

"Marry, sirs, if your importunity will

not take a slight answer, thus," said Stanley, relapsing into his fierce mood, "I met a man in the wood whom I would have made into carrion for the crows, but the silly fool of a woman caught my sword, and before I could let her, threw it into the river. Now are ye content?"

"Thou wouldst have slain a man, and for what?" said his brother.

"Because he had angered me," replied the ruffian, without any respect to the feelings of the ladies, whose terror, whilst he was in this mood, seemed to give him a frantic pleasure. "Because he had dared to play the hypocrite, fancying, the fool, that he could deceive me."

"And what man is he?" said his brother.

"It is no matter, I will not tell ye," replied Edward.

"You will not, Ned Stanley?" returned Sir Thomas, warmly.

"I will not, brother of mine!" answered Edward, with irrepressible rage; but the moment after his voice changed, his countenance altered, and he continued in a gentle tone, "at least, not

now, — not here. I pray ye pardon me; I will unfold all at a fitting opportunity."

"Somewhat hath crossed thee, Edward Stanley," said Sir George; "but cheer up, man, this should be a day of festive humour. Before thou didst return, I had in private given my formal consent to the marriage of Meg, here, with thy brother."

At the utterance of these words, which sounded in the ears of Edward Stanley like the firing of a cannon when one has been nearly deafened by a previous explosion, every particle of blood forsook his countenance, his whole frame seemed drawn together by an internal impulse, and shook as it it had been agitated by the palsy, while one bitter and scalding tear-drop glistened in his eye. He leaned with breathless emotion upon the back of his chair, from which he had started when this appalling news was told him, in silence, and with his head drooping down.

"In heaven's name, Ned Stanley," cried Sir George, whose astonishment was unbounded at this unlooked-for con-

duct, "what ails thee now? Art thou sorry we are like to become kinsmen so nigh? Thou dost not seem to be so close in love to my daughter as thou shouldst be for her husband's brother. I pray thee, tell me wherein is thy discontent. If it rest in my power, be assured I will amend it; let us have no afterclap when the marriage is solemnized."

"I am schooled," replied the disappointed Soldier, in a low voice. "I pray you pardon me."

He reseated himself in his chair, and leaning his head upon his hand, endeavoured to conceal his perturbation. The Knight of Haddon, however, was by no means satisfied, and with eyes flashing resentment, said, "On my word, sirs, this is courtesy I do not understand. Who am I to look to for an explanation?"

"With your leave and your fair daughter's pardon," said Sir Thomas, "I will explain, and I think to your satisfaction, that conduct which must doubtless appear singularly unseasonable. Whilst the

Lady Margaret was at Lathom, a man appeared there, a fellow of good presence, but of singular carriage, whose first sight caused no small alarm to my fair mistress. His name was Ashby."

"Ashby!" exclaimed Sir George; "the fanatical dog! What did he there?"

"No one could learn," answered Sir Thomas.

"Yea, marry," said Sir Simon Degge, "he told me himself, by way of *indicium* or hint, that he had come thither for the purpose of ending his course amid the waves of the sea; he had intended to drown himself, when Earl Derby took him to Lathom."

"It matters not," continued Sir Thomas. "He was soon at liberty, and appeared in various dresses; now as a barbarous fanatic, then as a tall forester, changing his manners with his garb."

"Ay, by'r lady," cried Sir Simon, "I have seen him at one time like a saint, all holiness; at another, he flew upon me without provocation, and if I had not

been rescued, would have slain me in a trice. He is a murtherous villain, be assured."

"And he has no reason to love my house," said Sir George, with something like a sigh of self-accusation.

"Then did he play the hypocrite most deeply," said Sir Thomas Stanley; "for he affected the warmest love to the Lady Margaret; and his earnest admiration and gentle carriage, when he threw aside the fanatic, begot a suspicion in my brother's head, that he was not that which he seemed, but some favoured lover of my mistress's, who had followed her from Haddon."

"By the light of my life," exclaimed Sir George, "this is strange; for it tallies well with a report that is current in the country. But the rumour gave this madbrained Proteus to thee, Dorothy; and I am right glad thou art excused."

The beautiful Dorothy blushed, and dropped her eyes to the floor, whilst her father proceeded, "As for thee, Margaret, I trust this explanation will clear thee also; else—"

"Nay, Sir George," said Sir Thomas Stanley, "if I am content, sure no one hath a right to complain. My fair mistress has condescended to set my heart at rest, by confessing her knowledge of Ashby, — that he was a tenant of yours, but had been dismissed from his farm. But whilst Edward Stanley was at Lathom, circumstances bore a colour which I thought justified both of us in suspecting the faith of my bride. The fanatic affected a desire to see the Lady Margaret, but studiously kept his business and his circumstances a mystery: he even threw out hints of an assignation in the gardens in the dark of the evening, by which a fatal accident had nearly ensued."

"Fatal! yes, o' my faith!" cried Sir Simon Degge, "for you rushed out of an arbour upon me, as I was seeking you, like a draw-cansir, *manus ad ferrum*, and nigh struck me dead before I could cry mercy. Adad, sirs, I had better been *inter pellitos Getas*, as Ovid calls them, *pugnans cum frigore cumque sagittis*, than among such a race of furies."

"Then the villain was not to be found," said Sir George.

"To this hour he hath not been heard of," replied Sir Thomas.

"He has," cried Edward, raising his head, and recovering the bold manner of his speech. "He was the hypocrite I met this day in the park, and I would have slain him, but —"

"I will have the slave hoisted to the highest tree in the wood," cried Sir George. "By my life, he shall suffer doom, and that presently."

"I pray ye pardon him," said Margaret Vernon, with great agitation. "The man hath more of folly than evil in his heart: he is not so wicked as ye deem him."

"How know'st thou that, Meg?" replied her father; "plead not for a wretched villain like Ashby, who hath forsaken the faith of his fathers, and doth cover with a veil of religion a soul as black as damnation itself. I say he shall die; I will hound him out of his kennel ere the day be past."

Margaret Vernon, who, in her careful-

ness to prevent any fatal contest between her lover and his sanguinary kinsman, had concealed the particulars of those scenes at Lathom, wherein Ashby had so essentially served her, now saw that the ill-fated enthusiast was likely to fall a victim to the malice of Edward Stanley, assisted by the blind indignation of her father and her lover. The furious impetuosity of the former, she was assured, would allow no chance for the fanatic's safety, his mind having once entertained an idea of Ashby's malignant duplicity; and she was also confident that no thought of having violated the laws of his country would restrain Sir George from executing summary justice upon the body of any man who should be so unfortunate as to incur his hatred, if the short-sighted sense of equity which he possessed assured him that his victim deserved the punishment he inflicted. * Maddened by these thoughts, the maiden laid her hand upon the arm of her father,

* There is a tradition at this day in the neighbourhood of Haddon, that the King of the Peak caused a murderer to be hanged upon a tree in his park, without awaiting the formality of a trial. How this self-constituted judge managed to escape a trial himself, the tradition does not say.

who had risen to call an attendant for the purpose of ordering the apprehension of Ashby; and, gazing with a look of bitter reproach upon Edward Stanley, she said, "Stir not, I beseech ye. If ye do aught of harm to that misguided, but affectionate wretch, ye will waste the blood of an innocent —"

Her words caused an instantaneous convulsion throughout the room. Her father seemed to listen for her voice, as if he had not heard that which she had uttered; her lover appeared again touched with a jealous spasm, and Edward Stanley, with a look of apprehension, gazed fiercely upon her, and spanned the hilt of his dagger. The Lady Dorothy, Sir Simon Degge, and Father John, were in an attitude of wonder. She herself preserved that look of intense and agonizing interest in her supplication for the enthusiast, with which she had first spoken.

"Yea, I repeat that which ye are dull in hearing," said she. "He is both innocent and affectionate; —he, the wild and fanatical Ashby, the apostatizing wretch that hath been driven abroad like a dog.

I speak the more surely, as I know the man."

"Thou knowest him!" said her father.

"Yes, pardon me; I confess it, if it be a crime." replied Margaret, "I know him, and better than I confessed to you, Thomas Stanley; but I then said not more, because the charity of a good deed is lost by its exposure. This man hath subsisted upon alms, since he was turned away from his tenancy. I have given him my mite; others have aided me to support him."

"And yet you had knowledge of my will!" said her father, with great fierceness. "You knew my will, and opposed it. By St. Mary, you have done ill, girl."

"She hath done no more, son," said the worthy Priest, "than thou wouldst applaud her for when thy anger had passed away. But if she have done wrong, lay the blame upon me, for I encouraged her in her charity. I was her almoner frequently in this very case."

"Support a heretic — one that would offer incense to his divinity in the burning of all of our faith!" cried Sir George.

"Why not?" replied Father John, calmly, "it is but Christian to return good for evil. I can even admire the high order of soul displayed by the Mahommedan Saladin, who commanded that alms should be given to the poor without distinction of creed."

"Nay, then, you would give meat to the tyger," cried the Knight of Haddon, "that would devour his benefactor!"

"Not so, son," replied Father John. "Somewhat hath mine experience given me to know of the human heart. Ashby's may be rude, fanatical, in some sense affected and hypocritical; but it is not vicious: it is stamped with the seal of love, the doctrines of the Gospel. And well may I take upon myself to say, his heart will no sooner lose the sense of obligation, the feeling of gratitude, than will the sun forget to enliven to-morrow with his beams."

"You have heard the account our son, Sir Thomas, hath given of him," said the Knight.

"I have heard and marked," answered the good Ecclesiastic; "but it takes not

much examination to discover that the worthy youth has been imposed on. This Knight, Sir Simon, says his journey into Lancashire was to destroy himself. Pity is it, it was so, but it is probable enough. He hath long been beset by a devilish inclination to suicide, arising out of some strange doctrine of the reformed church; and this proneness to self-destruction may account for his appearance and his business at Latham, without attributing to him aught of knavery and malice."

"Father, Father! till now you were the friend of my house's honour," exclaimed Sir George Vernon.

"Who says I am not now does wrong me painfully," replied the Priest, with great gentleness. "If I were not, I should betray my own lineage, for we are of kindred. But it is said Ashby appeared in the garb of a forester. What man saw him so clothed?"

"That did I," replied Edward Stanley, "on the night he left Lathom. When I saw him this morning he wore the same dress."

"I fear, Master Stanley," said the pe-

netrating Priest, "that the wild manner of this poor wretch hath been too plain for your high military spirit to brook. You have conceived some offence against him."

"Offence!" returned the soldier, scornfully. "But I am not now to tell over again what was witnessed by several here. The personal insult I received from that dog deserved that he should be hanged. I did him too much courtesy to draw on him."

"He perhaps did not understand your courtesy?" said Father John, rather cynically.

"Nor I yours, Sir Priest," cried Edward Stanley. "I trow yet there is some plot in this matter."

"Beshrew the hearts that are in it then," said the Priest. "But whatever plot, Heaven help me, I may have brought these gray hairs into, bear witness that I acquit that poor wanderer from being my accessary. Wonder not that he should profess love and admiration for this dear child, that he should cherish her memory, and cling to her support: and, if he did seek to see her at Lathom,—if, not being

able to procure admission to her in his own reformed garb, he assumed the dress of a forester, ye may believe he needed the assistance of his guardian angel, the pecuniary assistance which he could not elsewhere obtain, most likely to aid him in his return hither."

"It is, indeed, probable," said Sir Thomas Stanley, with great candour; "and I trust, Father, you will forgive my brother's impetuosity, when you shall know he was not informed of those circumstances regarding this vagabond that have now come out."

"Youth has its privilege as well as age," replied the Priest; "we have not so much time to spend on earth, that we should waste any of it in discord. But I trust, good kinsman, your anger against us, poor Margaret and myself, is abated, or we shall also fly the country."

"And thou, fair Margaret," said Sir Thomas Stanley, "wilt also pardon my brother Ned for his suspicion. It was his concern for my honour that made him scrupulous."

"He is pardoned," answered Margaret,

gravely, but without hesitation; "the brother of my lord can give me no offence."

"Why, truly, then, sirs, let harmony be restored!" said Sir Simon Degge. "And, Master Edward Stanley, if that heretic do cross thy path again, though thou art *in campis nutritus*, recollect that Heaven *non sanguine colitur*, — let thy dagger rest in its scabbard, man: it is no bauble to amuse thy fingers withal."

"In sooth it is, Simon Degge," cried Sir George; "if it be but to shave thy beard withal. But how now, sir Knight? Hast thou forgot thy suit to Dorothy? I have just given away one wench; if thou art so minded, here is the other for thee."

"*Ah regina pulcherrima mundi!*" exclaimed the Knight of Bowdon, stretching out one arm towards Dorothy Vernon, and placing the other on his breast; "*inter sidereos polos recipi digna*, as saith the learned Prudentius."

"Nay, good fellow, speak English," said Sir Thomas Stanley.

"Be at peace, ye vandals!" cried Sir

Simon, indignant at this interruption. "I crave pardon, good Sir Thomas; "but the damsel hath hold of the Latin tongue right humanely."

"And I wish the devil had hold of thy tongue most inhumanely," cried Sir George Vernon. "Come, Ned Stanley, leave thy melancholy visage. Pour out a horn of canary, and charge home, boy. If thou dost hold thy humour, I shall swear thou hadst a mind of Meg thyself, and art down in the mouth for the loss of her."

The face of the soldier was instantly covered by a burning glow, (we will not call it blush, for there was no sense of shame,) which, produced by the words of his host, calling to his remembrance the fierce and desperate course, and the many and base arts he had used to gain possession of the woman he now saw lost to him for ever, racked him with a tormenting fever of the mind. He breathed hard, his lips were drawn together, and he gazed on the victim that had escaped him with a look of ruthless and unquenchable vengeance.

On the contrary, Margaret Vernon, the injured party, and she whose right it was to have discovered scorn and indignation, shrank with terror; and, after casting a hasty glance upon the features of her oppressor, dropped her eyes upon the ground, unable to sustain his sight. But it happened, perhaps fortunately for all parties, that Sir George was too deeply busied in the wine cup, and the rest of the company in attending to a pantomime of love, which was exhibited by Sir Simon Degge in his addresses to the fair Dorothy to observe the emotion either of Margaret Vernon or Edward Stanley; and the former, having withdrawn her contemplation from the soldier, at the time she removed her eyes, and entered into the scene of gaiety beside her, speedily recovered the elastic spring of her merry humour. No one, indeed, unless his heart was distracted with such conflicting passions as agitated that of Edward Stanley, could behold so finished a specimen of the ridiculous as Sir Simon Degge afforded, without overflowing with mirth. Seated beside the object of his

new passion, the Knight of Bowdon languished at and ogled her without mercy; at the same time "sighing like furnace," and pressing his palms together in silent admiration, and with an air which produced peals of laughter from those around, whilst the damsel herself, whose mildness and charity were ever themes of applause in the mouth of Sir Simon, could not refrain from shewing him that *exceptio probat regulam.*

"Ha!" exclaimed the Knight, with a twitch of the muscles of his face, "Do I hear aright? Is it the mild and gentle Dorothy, that doth join these roisters in their unseemly laughter? O' my conscience, I deemed thou hadst been an unblemished dove, a maiden lacking that *acer spiritus*, which doth hinder many a fair face from getting a worthy husband. I never hear a woman laugh aloud, but I set her down for a shrew."

"Then what think ye of me, Sir Simon?" said Margaret Vernon, thrusting her arm under his; "surely I am grave enough to become your favourite."

"Grave!" exclaimed the Knight,

drawing away his arm without ceremony. "Heard ye ever the chatterpies about Wormhill, or the daws in Peakhole? Were ye ever under a great sky-light in a hail-storm? O' my conscience, damsel! I believe thou wouldst have been heard in the confusion of tongues at Babel. Thou art as grave as a monkey i'the Bear-garden, that hops about to gather the nuts that are thrown at him by holiday urchins. If I were tied to thee, I would pray nine times a day that I might lose my hearing, to be quit of thy insolent wit."

"Here's a railer!" cried Margaret, holding up her hands, with affected surprize.

"Railer," continued the Knight of Bowdon, "I have heard thee rail after such a fashion, as would have tutored Xantippe, or given fresh head to the malice of Thersites. The wit which nature endowed thee withal, thou hast converted into poisonous gall, and a man had better stand at a mark to be shot at with honest lead and saltpetre, than with the arrows of thy displeasure.

Thou art lovely and wise, and canst be courteous enough when it behoves thy will to be so; but if ever the devil wore petticoats —"

"Oh, defend me!" cried Margaret, clapping her hands to her ears. "Heard ye ever such a monster? Why, sir, your tongue, — Heaven help the woman that is to hear it for life, — hath the continuance of a water-wheel, and doth dash about its spray as unmeaningly."

"One had better live in a bell-loft than in one house with such a rattle-pate as you are," said Sir Simon.

"I'faith, I had much rather be the ringer's wife, than yours," said Margaret; "for at least, he doth leave his clapper behind him, whilst you have yours ready hung, and ever agoing."

"Be not afraid," returned Sir Simon; "you shall do as you please for me. I will not rob knight or bell-ringer of his bride. — Heaven be with thee: go thy way, child, I am content. I will turn me to thy sister, who hath all thy beauty with a world of learning, and

sweet humour, wherein thou art especially deficient."

"Ay, sir, but I will not allow you so easily to throw off your allegiance," replied Margaret Vernon. "I am your liege sovereign; to me you swore faith and duty at Lathom. I can prove it by ample testimony; without my leave you shall not offer your vows to another idol."

"Here's a tale!" cried Sir Simon, with great astonishment. "If I was once fond enough to offer my vows to you, did you not cast me off, deny, reject, and utterly discard me? Are you not now, by your own and your father's consent, the betrothed bride of this gallant spark?"

"Be civil, sir philosopher," cried Sir Thomas, smiling.

"Civil! I scorn your inference," cried the Knight warmly. "Civility is my humour; if I am distinguished by any one virtue above another, it is for courtesy. But who ever held that a subject was bound to retain his allegiance, after the abdication of his sovereign, or a

servant his fidelity to a master by whom he had been dismissed? O' my conscience, this is a new droctrine; but if it were so, love is an arbitrary passion; you have followed your own bent, and I will follow mine. The *incorrupta vox bene judicantium* will acquit me, or I've lost my wits."

"I would speak a word with ye in private, sir," said Edward Stanley, to Sir George Vernon; who immediately arose and withdrew with the soldier.

CHAP. XIV.

How many wiles doth treason generate,
How many parts doth treason personate;
How many shapes doth treason change into,
How many shames doth treason undergo,
Before he waves abroad his fiery torch!

PYLGRYMAGE OF GRACE.

THE mind of Edward Stanley had had an opportunity, during the time which he occupied in silence, to recover its self-possession, and that habit of restless policy which his late agitation had disturbed. He began, whilst the conversation we have before related between Sir Simon Degge and the rest was yet in its commencement, to turn his mind to the situation of Sparandam and the Jesuit; whose presence at the hall was not only requisite to connect the chain of their treasonable plot, but would, he thought, be of considerable utility to him, in assisting to discover the intercourse

which subsisted between the lady Dorothy and the Outlaw. And he was the more anxious that his colleagues should change their situation, insomuch as the residence of two strangers of a foreign aspect and demeanour at the cottage of the woodman, Ollerenshaw, was likely to excite much observation, and might lead to circumstances unfavourable to their designs; especially as they were overlooked by the Outlaw, and the husband and son of the Jesuit's sister, who were not, as she declared, to be trusted. The Outlaw, too, might be a nobleman of the queen's party; and this, coupled with the words which Stanley, in his conversation with him, had hastily let fall, and also with the unremitted plots of the catholics against the authority of Elizabeth, would form ample grounds for suspicion. In the large household of Sir George Vernon, which consisted of nearly two hundred domestics, and within the precints of the hall, which was of itself a miniature city, there would be less chance of their being remarked, and but little of their

exciting such suspicions as would be of any detriment to their projects of rebellion. Ideas of this nature had, for some minutes before Stanley desired the company of his host in a private apartment, whirled through his imagination with great rapidity, and he concluded, at length, to give Sir George immediate information of the situation of their colleagues, and to desire he would invite them to the hall. This he did in as brief terms as possible, as well as of the Jesuit's affinity to Ashby and the wife of Ollerenshaw, and concluded by a request that the Knight of Haddon would procure him some clothing with which he might despatch his own servant Ridgway to the cottage of the woodman!

"What manner of men are they?" said the Knight. "Is your colonel of my make, or thine, Ned? Is he spare or pursy? And this priest, too — is he aught like our chaplain, Sir John?"

"Sparandam is less than you are by the head," answered Stanley, "but much broader in the back. Give him a strait German doublet and trunk-hose, and let

them be wide enough. He is without arms too: let him have a stout brand and dudgeon; he can make clean work on occasion with either. The Jesuit is tall and thin, but Sir John's cassock may fit him, unless you think he had best appear in some other fashion."

"On one account I would have him do so," replied Sir George. "If he come hither as a Jesuit, my kinsman, Father John, will smell out his business; and though I should mark not that from any fear of his treachery, 'tis likely he would favour us with his advice upon this subject when it would not be necessary. So let him play the courtier, the gentleman, ought of lay character that he is most skilled in. But let us go to my wardrobe, and there thou shalt select their habits and accoutrements."

Sir George led the way to a small room, adjoining the knight's sleeping chamber, where the habits of his ancestors for many generations, together with his own more modern clothes, were well secured from dust and moths in large oaken presses, with which the room was sur-

rounded. Hoods, bonnets, caps, and hats, of all fashions and times, hung around, associated with arms, scarves, baldricks, and other elegancies of a military cast, that were too valuable to be arranged in the common armoury of the hall. In fact, here was a choice and rich assortment of all kinds of apparel fit for a man of rank, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; and to men of a more philosophical turn than the Knight of Haddon and his libertine companion, the various changes of dress, the dissimilar fashion of each era, the alteration of the material used for clothes from one age to another, the gradual disuse of gaudy colours and gorgeous embellishment, as the nation advanced in refinement, and the succession of fashions less cumbersome and more elegant, would have read the history of many generations that had fluttered their hour and were passed away. But in these dresses, both of ancient and modern fabrication, that were presented to their examination, Sir George Vernon and Edward Stanley sought for nothing

but a supply to the necessities of their colleagues; and in such a mass of dresses, sufficient to have supplied a modern masquerade or fancy ball, they could not fail to meet with satisfaction. They selected a suit of mulberry-coloured velvet, handsomely guarded with gold, for the German colonel, together with a stout beaver, ornamented with a plume of dark feathers; and for the Jesuit, a doublet and hose of black velvet, slashed and puffed with blue silk, black silken nether-stocks, a hat of black velvet, with a single sable feather, and shoes with blue rosettes; a dress befitting a man of quality, were he either a private or a public man.

"This sword and dagger," said Sir George, taking down two weapons which hung against the wall, "I wore in Northumberland's time; they are well worth the wearing of a better soldier than I ever was."

"If you send them to Sparandam," replied Edward Stanley, "they will be worn by as gallant a fellow, and as able a soldier as any this day in Europe."

"I am glad on't," said Sir George,

"I can the more willingly part with them on thine assurance. But hold, here is a stick for his companion; it hath upheld the kingdom, for it sustained Sir Harry Vernon, and he was the prop of the first Tudor."

"Perhaps it is ominous," said Edward Stanley, handling the cane, which was surmounted with a golden head; "it may again prop the kingdom, in supporting our worthy brother."

"Heaven prosper thy fancy!" cried the Knight. "Wit doth sometimes better than force: at all events force can do nothing without wit."

"But we have both," said Stanley; "wit and force are pictured in the Jesuit and Sparandam. I would not wager a tester upon the courage of Father Paul, nor a noble upon the invention, except in affairs of war, of Sparandam; and yet are they both in high trust with the Spanish court, which well knows how to profit by their several capacities. Though they should have exchanged garbs, you would at one glance

know which was the soldier and which the priest. Command is stamped on the bold brow of Sparandam, submission on the gentle front of his colleague; and yet is the wild warrior absolutely governed, led as a child, by the mild and accommodating Priest; he bears the yoke, but it is on his neck so lightly that he does not feel its pressure, nor suspect that he has a master."

"From your limning," said Sir George, "I should not augur any thing extraordinary in your friends; but let me see them, and then I will certify you surely."

"One thing I had forgot," said Stanley; "my brother has already some suspicion of our plot; but I have sounded him, and find he is too careless and indolent of soul to do us service. At present it will be best that he remain in ignorance of our measures; and that his doubts be not blown into certainty, Sparandam and the Priest must appear as your friends, not as mine: Tom Stanley knows I have no business of such moment as should require a foreign embassy, and

my own friends would have sought me at Lathom."

"That as you shall please," answered Sir George. "Give your own orders."

Having made the dresses up in two bundles, each wrapped in a large cloak, they quitted the wardrobe; and Edward Stanley having called his valet, Ridgway, into his own chamber, gave him instructions to carry the clothes to the cottage of Ollerenshaw, so soon as the night should set in; and, at the same time, sent a note to his associates, requesting that they would appear at the hall as the friends of Sir George, and both of them in the characters of laymen, to suit the habits that were sent, and particularly enjoining them to beware lest the Outlaw should mark their change of dress, or gather any circumstance which might betray their correspondence. He advised them to come, if possible, to Haddon that night, for the purpose of avoiding the observation of the Outlaw, but not so early as to arrive there before the company had retired to rest, as it was necessary that they should have an inter-

view with the Knight of Haddon before they appeared as his friends in the company of his guests and domestics. And that they might enter without noise, he directed them to take their stand beneath the walls of the mansion until he should point out to them where they might enter, for which purpose he would keep on the look out from the high tower.

Having thus, like an experienced soldier, made his dispositions and despatched his aide-de-camp, the heart of Edward Stanley regained its buoyancy. Bright visions once more floated before his idea, and cheated him into vivacity; and though he sometimes drooped at the remembrance of Margaret Vernon, and bit his lips in despite, yet he resolved not to abandon himself to despair for the loss of one sister, when there was another quite as lovely, though not so much to his taste, who could not, as he conjectured, escape from becoming his wife. Heartening himself with these fancies, the gay Soldier returned to the parlour, whither Sir George had preceded him, and found the Knight of Haddon and

his intended son-in-law busily engaged in arranging the day of marriage, the company to be invited, and the other minutiæ attendant upon an event which it was customary at that period to celebrate with exceeding splendour. He halted upon hearing this theme, which caused the shadow to be renewed upon his brow; but reflecting that it was necessary for him to master this feeling, if he would preserve the confidence of Sir George and his brother, he advanced to the Lady Margaret, and seizing her hand before she could resist, he pressed it to his lips, and said, "I trust, fair sister, you will pace a measure with me at your bridal."

Without returning any answer, and with eyes cast upon the ground, Margaret made a low curtsey, and withdrew her hand.

"What! you are still mindful of my offence," whispered Stanley, taking a seat beside her. "That I have dared to love you still rankles in your heart; and though I am now utterly reft, abandoned by hope, plunged into despair, yet would

it shew too much mercy to pardon such a wretch as I am."

"I pardon you, sir," replied Margaret Vernon, in the same low voice. "I have long forgiven you; — but I fear you — I must ever dread your presence."

"Wretch that I am, to be so curst," said Stanley, with a sigh; "but surely the liberty I gave you of setting the finishing stroke to my despair by this espousal, deserves better thoughts."

"I doubt, sir," replied the damsel, "whether that liberty was yielded out of a friendly spirit; you were not single-hearted; you did not quit Lathom to further my happiness."

"If, by that word, you mean your marriage with my brother," returned Stanley, "I grant ye, such happiness was not in my thought. I would rather have seen ye dead, — both shriven and shrouded for your burial; but I had no design save your pleasure in leaving you with Earl Derby. How generously you have repaid my courtesy, let your own heart declare!"

"You had nothing to expect from me," said Margaret hastily; "you well knew, sir, with what loathing your violence had inspired me. Nor was I to be deceived by your affected liberality in quitting Lathom into respect for a man like you, or to be induced, when I found you had business here, to put a conrstaint, out of mere delicacy, upon my own safety."

"Business here! safety! What mean ye?" said Stanley, with affected wonder, but real apprehension.

"Nay, sir, make not a mystery of that which is as clear as light," replied Margaret. "A man named Smalley has been with your father. You guess what I would say."

"No more than I can guess what you tapestried monarch would say," replied Edward Stanley, pointing to the arras which covered the walls of the parlour. "Say on, I beseech ye."

"Then you know not Smalley?" proceeded Margaret Vernon; "he is the water-bailiff of Liverpool."

"I know him well," answered Stanley,

" a false nimble-tongued villain as ever belied his neighbour. What said he ?"

" That two of your friends," replied Margaret, " who had escaped from the wreck of a Spanish vessel, had, out of his love to your family, been received by him into his house ; but the commander of the Spaniard, who delivered himself into the hands of the governor, confessed the vessel was on a warlike errand against this country ; and he, unwilling to deliver up your friends, had counselled them to quit the town. This advice they hastily followed ; and the water-bailiff, alarmed for your safety, which might be endangered by the confession of the Spanish captain, hastened to Lathom to apprize your father of that which had fallen out."

" But his labour was lost," said Stanley, with a sneer ; " for my father knew all before."

" He knew not that any life on board the Spaniard was saved," continued Margaret. " He had assured himself that every man had perished, for he saw the vessel part amid the waves."

"True, love; but get to something new," said Stanley. "Of his experience and thoughts regarding that scene I am well informed; and what has it to do further with my history? How could the escape of these two men, if escape they did, lead to my having business with Sir George Vernon? — for so, I take it, you mean."

"Because my father dropped some words of alarming import in the presence of your brother," said Margaret, "before we left Haddon to visit your parents; he knew of your arrival in England, questionless from yourself, before your own father, of whose willingness to join in your plots you seemed more doubtful than of mine. Your liberal offer of leaving me in peace at Lathom was made, that you might confer with my father on matters of treason — I will not be otherwise persuaded."

"But does Earl Derby believe this?" said Stanley.

"No matter, sir," answered the damsel; "if the confidence of a worthy parent be beguiled, it will not be the first

time. But though he would not believe you were so base, he did not refuse us his permission to return instantly to Haddon, that I might watch over my father, and save him from those dangers into which your shameless ambition would drag your's.

"Thou art a noble girl, by my soul," said Stanley, gazing on her with admiration; "thou shouldst have been mine, to have found a spirit that matched thine own."

"Heaven forbid!" returned the damsel; "but I caution you to beware, I now know that you are treasonably engaged."

"How do you know it?" said Stanley.

"What is become of Probus?" replied Margaret.

"I know not," said Stanley; "I am not your father's confessor."

"You are not," returned the lady, with a bitter smile; "I pray Heaven you may not prove a tempter that shall lure him to ruin. But as I am a Vernon, of a house that hath feared little, and dared much, I will cross your air-blown projects, if ye do not abandon them. I know

your secrets, sir; and if I hear that you proceed, I will lay ye open to the queen, and have ye crushed by authority. Beware, then, for I will watch ye at every turn!"

Though Edward Stanley easily dissembled the alarm which this conversation had excited, he could not conceal from himself, that, if his treasonable designs should become known, his situation would be proportionably critical.

It was plain that Margaret Vernon earnestly suspected, if she was not perfectly assured, that his plot against the queen was still on foot; and the appearance of Sparandam and the Jesuit, whom it was probable she would recognize, if she had heard any description of their persons whilst at Latham, would serve to confirm her in her opinion. Her high spirit and filial affection left no doubt upon his mind that she would execute her threat of exposing him to the queen's vengeance, rather than see her father run any hazard in allying himself to his fortunes; and it was therefore absolutely necessary that the knight's

co-operation should be concealed from her, or that he should become master of some means by which she would be intimidated into silence; as without the assistance of Sir George Vernon, Stanley knew his own efforts to be feeble and unavailing. That her father's treason could long be concealed from the penetrating mind of Margaret Vernon, especially on the arrival of their confederates, was next to impossible; and unless it was by a threat similar to that which had preserved the secret of his violence to the maiden, a mortal quarrel with his brother, he could not conjure up any talisman that would bind the bold heart of the lovely Vernon. But all at once, on the mere probability that Margaret might be acquainted with her sister's love to the Outlaw, which he inferred from seeing them together on the high tower, at the time he met the Outlaw, he turned to the damsel, and laying his hand upon hers, said, with an artful smile, —

"If you would have the secrets of your friends well kept, do not, fair Margaret, pry into mine. That I should be proved a

traitor, or a libertine, would do thee little good,— that the fair Dorothy should be found a —"

"A what, sir," whispered Margaret, breathless with alarm.

"A light o'love," continued Stanley, who found he had touched upon the right key, "that doth hold converse with a man of mystery, — with a slave, that this day I would have slain, but he had not the heart to encounter me."

"Thou art—"

"A devil, perhaps, sweet one,—a hideous Beelzebub or Ashtaroth. No matter what I am, but you have no secret of which I am not master; all that you have revealed of that ideot Ashby was well known to me, and more. Perhaps, as he has returned into the Peak, he may again claim your wardship; think ye he will stand beneath your window to-night? Constance Ollerenshaw, that fell hag, though she be his sister, would not moisten his lips if he were dying."

As, with a fiendish grin, the Soldier thus taunted her with his knowledge of

those matters which she believed to be concealed from all persons, except Dame Ollerenshaw, her husband, the Lady Dorothy, and Father John, Margaret Vernon nearly sank from her chair, and continued to look upon her tormentor with eyes of horror, unable to utter a word.

"Do thou continue curious about my affairs, sweet Margaret," he continued, "and I will open this romantic history to your father. Nay, I will assist him to discomfit this knight-errant; I need scarce remind you of your father's summary style of meting out judgment."

"Villain!" exclaimed the damsel.

"Ay, so I may be," returned Stanley, squeezing her hand, which he still held in his; "but we understand each other. If I am a villain, I am a bold one, sweetheart; and it is odds but I do more than I threaten. But rest in peace; at least if there be not peace between you and me the blame shall be on your side, not on mine; for if thou wilt promise not to trouble thy father with the whims that have usurped thy brain, I will do the like."

"I will promise nothing," replied Margaret.

"Is it war, then?" said Stanley. "Believe I am your friend when I bid you speak again, I have never disguised my true soul from thee, Margaret:— I trusted to thy haughty heart being captivated by that martial spirit,— that fearless and unbending independency, which even my enemies have allowed me; had I played the smooth hypocrite, the gentle deceiver, it is like I had been better received. But thou knowest me thoroughly; I am no neutral, but a warm friend or fierce foe. I would not shake thy spirit, fair Margaret; speak again."

"I have spoken," replied the damsel, firmly. "My father's safety is above all considerations; I will act as I see fit,— I will promise nothing."

Edward Stanley looked in her face to see if there was any symptom of a wavering spirit, but she was quite composed and resolute in her determination. He kissed her hand once more, and, rising from his seat, walked towards her father.

"What have Meg and you been en-

gaged about all this time?" said Sir George Vernon. "You fasten yourself upon one wench, and Degge on another, and leave your brother and me to provide our own entertainment. By my life, Tom, brother though he be, I would not have him whispering for half an hour on a stretch with my bride; he'll perhaps chouse thee out of her, sure as thou dost deem thyself."

"I confess he had been making better of his time, if he had whispered as long with the fair Dorothy," said Sir Thomas.

"I have both whispered and spoke loud to the Lady Dorothy Vernon," replied Edward Stanley, "but neither profited me — in truth, sirs, I am not made of amatory stuff; there is no more love to be beat out of me, or into me, by a pair of fine eyes, than there is valour in that lump of avarice, Simon Degge. If a woman will have me without much wooing, and take my word for the little good I have in me, well — then will I marry, and prove a right loving husband; but I would rather cast dice for my life on the drum-head, than pass half a score

years in repeating vows which would, perhaps, cost me more trouble to invent than the woman was worth."

"If thou dost woo after this fashion," said Sir George, "I do not marvel thou art yet a bachelor."

"It is better than talking syllabubs," replied Edward Stanley; "and if I were for once to flout a woman with the common cant of your downright lover, I'll be sworn she would discover I was laughing at her. When I have joy in my heart, I cannot wear a sad brow; when I am wither-galled, the devil could not bribe me to cloak it with a smirking countenance. Beside, I hate that which most women love, I mean coquetry; I do not understand being smiled upon at one moment, and frowned on at another; if a good wench treats me well, I am thankful; if badly, I grow indifferent: such is my philosophy."

"And thy philosophy may do for the camp, where your women are common property," said Sir George; "but there is a difference between the chrystal stream and a stagnated puddle."

"A chrystal stream should be the emblem of innocence," said Stanley; "but sure it is no proof of a woman's purity, that she expects to be raised, by the admiration of her lover, not only above her compeers, but all other women that were ever formed. A man now-a-days must become a fool, a creature *sans* common sense, a brainless gossipping milk-sop, if he wish to humour his mistress. There must be nought comparable with her in creation; the blazing sun, that the eye of man, how fierce soever, durst not encounter; and you, gentle moon, whose aspect softens the souls of the most valiant, are no more to be mated with her eyes, than a piece of unwrought adamant to a diamond of the first water."

"Well, sir," said his brother, smiling, "you are in the vein — proceed."

"It is true, by Heaven!" cried Edward. "Her breast must have more whiteness than the swan, though she be as grey as a Winchester goose; and her form surpass the symmetry of the Florence marbles, though she be as thin as a lath, or as round as a tun."

"Well, Ned," cried Sir George, "on my conscience thou art the very argument of male-scolds; as perfect a shrew in doublet and hose as ever sconced beneath pourfled petticoat. But are we to take all thou hast said for verity, for thine opinion? Wouldst thou not force thy nature some little to win yonder maid, Dorothy Vernon."

The Soldier cast his eyes toward the lady Dorothy, who sat pensively on her chair, listening, or seeming to listen, to the earnest nonsense of Sir Simon Degge; and gazing on her mild and reposed features for a few moments, he turned again to her father, and grasping him by the hand, said, "To gain that maid I would nigh change my nature."

He said this more to avoid giving umbrage to Sir George, than because he felt any affection for Dorothy, from whose feminine figure his eyes hastily wandered to the more robust and imposing graces of her sister. But he had not much time to contemplate those charms he so earnestly coveted. The hour of supper arrived, and Sir George,

his guests, and family, retired from the parlour to the hall, for the purpose of enjoying their closing meal for the day. Edward Stanley took the Knight's arm as they passed along, and, whispering into his ear the contents of the note he had despatched to his colleagues, requested he would watch with him on the tower for their appearance.

CHAP. XV.

> But soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!
>
> ROMEO AND JULIET.

To avoid observation, Edward Stanley and Sir George Vernon retired to their respective chambers at the same hour as the other inhabitants of the mansion, and suffered a considerable time to elapse, that the guests might betake themselves to repose, before they proceeded to the high tower. By almost imperceptible degrees the heavy trampling of the servants, the clapping of the doors, and the grating of the bolts and bars, died away, and were succeeded by a cautious murmur, broken now and then by the loud bark of the dogs, or the high and boastful neigh of the Knight's coursers, and at length, by uninterrupted silence. All must have retired to rest,

except the porter, and one or two other servants, who had a charge to sit up for the arrival of expected guests; and these were, doubtless, comfortably seated in the porter's lodge beside the gate, drowning care in a flaggon of double ale.

Sir George first left his chamber, and lighted by the rays of a brilliant moon, which darted in at every casement, he proceeded with silent steps to the room of Edward Stanley, and found him anxiously waiting for him. Without speaking, he made him a sign to follow, and passing onward entered a suite of chambers which were at this time unoccupied: the entrance was concealed by the tapestry which overhung the wall, and when they were withinside of the first chamber, there was no visible mark which could guide them to any passage into the next; but Sir George, lifting up the arras, conducted his young Achilles safely through the labyrinth, and they arrived at the foot of a spiral staircase, which brought them to the high tower. Up this stair they

had occasionally to grope in darkness; but, in general, the scanty portion of moonlight, which could make its way through the loop-holes of the tower, served them to trace out their road pretty distinctly. At length they arrived at the top of the stair, and clambering through a small hole, only large enough to admit of the egress of one person at a time, the Knight and his friend stood on the top of the high tower. Above this, indeed, there was another small turret, which might serve for a watch-tower, in open day; but they were sufficiently high to descry any object which appeared at the distance of one hundred yards from the wall of the mansion, beyond which distance the trees crowded together into a thick and dark wood.

The Knight of Haddon and his young companion looked out upon the moon with great joy; not because it was still and lovely, but because it served them to observe distinctly the approach of their friends. To the poet, or the lover of the beauties of nature, which is

perhaps the same, the view from Haddon high tower, on such an evening, would indeed have been a feast of mental enjoyment. It was such a scene, —

> " As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
> O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
> When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
> And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
> Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
> And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
> O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
> And tip with silver every mountain's head."

Let one of my readers stand upon Haddon tower, on such a night, and he will nearly swear that the translator of Homer, who has added many beauties to this night-piece, stood there before him when he conceived the foregoing lines. The foliage of the trees, as the piercing rays of the moon darted through their branches, assumed a transparent and yellow hue, not resembling the seared and yellow leaves of autumn, but a brilliant and golden verdure, like that which colours the crop of the harvest; and the hills, which on all sides surrounded the residence of the Vernon,

and whose tops could be descried rising high above the wood, were tinged with a silver light still more beautiful than the more sober yellow which was shed upon the trees. Above all, the deep blue of the sky, which was not defaced by a single cloud, presented the field of a picture, quite worthy of the scenery depicted in it.

Whilst they were yet silent, Sir George being seated upon the leads of the turret to rest himself, after the toil of mounting the stair, and Edward Stanley having taken his station beside one of the battlements, so as to conceal his head within the shade of the indentation, from any one that might be beyond the walls, the sound of a musical instrument was heard, as if arising from beneath the walls, and Sir George rose up to take a survey of the ground beneath. But Stanley laid hold upon his arm, and whispered, "Do not stir; we are going to have a serenade, — listen awhile, I pray ye."

"It is perhaps your brother, who has thrown open his casement," replied the Knight in the same low voice. "Sure

Margaret and Dorothy would not amuse themselves with piping at this hour? But, your lovers are privileged."

"Are they so?" returned Edward; "You will change your opinion, shortly, — Hark!"

A sweet and melodious tune was once or twice played over, first exceedingly low, and then with more volume and freedom, upon an instrument, which, if it might be judged of by the sound, was a guitar or lute; and then a voice, denoted by its round and full tenor to be a man's, though blended with great sweetness, sang the following little song: —

Around me his arms twining,
My true love said to me,
When the summer sun is shining,
I will come again to thee;
When the summer sun is shining,
And the birds are whistling free,
Oh! then my own dear true love,
I'll come again to thee.

When the mist is rising high, love,
And the lark sings o'er the lea,
I'll watch the dappled sky, love,
And come again to thee;

I'll rouse the moorcock early,
And drive the pheasant from his tree,
And then my own dear true love,
I'll come again to thee.

I love the deep-mouthed hound, love,
With dewlap hanging low;
I love with wind and stream, love,
In merry bark to row;
When I've chased the noble hart, love!
And sail'd upon the sea,
Oh! then my own dear true love,
I'll come again to thee.

"It is not Tom Stanley's voice," said Edward, when the song was done, and eyeing Sir George with a keen smile.

"Nor Degge's, nor any man of my household," said the Knight.

"I fear, noble Knight," said the subtle Edward, grasping the hand of his companion, "I fear we are betrayed. That voice is the Outlaw's."

"What!" cried the Knight in a voice which made Stanley fear he would be overheard, "the Outlaw's! By my life, I cannot, — I will not believe it."

"No more would I if I had not known the voice," returned Stanley; "but be

silent; listen, — we shall, perhaps, hear enough to convince us."

Stanley had scarcely concluded the sentence, when a casement was opened in one of the rooms, which looked out into the park, though which room it was, as that side of the quadrangle in which it was situated was advanced considerably beyond the tower on which they stood, they had no means of judging; and very few moments elapsed before the song of the Outlaw was answered by a few disorderly notes struck on an instrument similar to his own. This was soon found to be a concerted signal, for the notes had not died away, when the Outlaw, himself, in the same dress which he wore when Stanley met him in the park, came from beneath the trees, and approached the window. The heart of Sir George Vernon was in a flame, he muttered curses between his teeth, and could hardly be restrained by the persuasion of Edward Stanley, from shouting aloud to the intruder.

"Hold ye still," whispered Stanley;

" fortune hath smiled upon us, to bring us to sight of this treachery. My honour is concerned as well as yours, and I will right both; but be cool and patient."

" Patient!" ejaculated the furious Knight; " tell the fiends that are plunged in burning brimstone to be patient! What! to practise on me, — on me whose power hath been feared within the peak more than the sovereign's, — on me whose anger no man hath dared to brave? May their hearts be withered!"

" Content yourself, noble father," said Stanley, who feared the Knight's impetuosity would mar any further discovery; " I pledge ye my word to slay this bold knave, but do not lose me the opportunity by scaring him off the ground; and I shall hold myself honourably satisfied if you will promise me the hand of this romantic maid without further ado of begging and wooing; let me earn her with my sword, not my tongue."

" Why, wilt thou accept her?" said Sir George.

" Accept her! ay, in good faith," answered Stanley; " for though she has

been weak enough to parley with this man of mystery, I'll be sworn the blood of the Vernon will bear no contamination."

"She is a rebel to my blood!" said the Knight, bitterly. "To dishonour me by a clandestine intercourse. Oh, curse upon the villain that hath wrought her to it!"

"Hush, listen,—they speak," said Stanley, leaning his head over the battlement.

The lovers were both concealed from sight by the projection of the house; but their voices, though they spoke in a low tone, sounded distinctly in the stillness of the night. Some words had been spoken whilst Stanley and Sir George Vernon were in conversation, which they had not heard; for the voice of Dorothy was first remarked, and betrayed at once an artless affection for her lover which could not have been the growth of a short period.

"Thou wilt indeed be wearied, love," she said, in a voice of thrilling tenderness; "the dews of evening and the damp

of these woods will betray thy health. Thou art well; but though the fair moon be shining so brightly, I cannot tell the rose upon thy cheek."

"Would thou wert as safe and happy, my beloved, as I am well," replied the Outlaw. "Oh, what man is he that would not be afoot to gaze upon this glorious night, rather than pass it by in the death of sleep, — for sleep is death while it lasts: and, sooth, then, above all men, I should be abroad, who have two suns to light me, besides that brilliant orb. Thine eyes, sweet one, are brighter than yon moon, it enlightens the world, but thy eyes pierce my breast, — they look upon my heart."

"It is well for us that other eyes are not so piercing," said Dorothy with a sigh. "I have constant fears for thee, love. Thou wouldst do well to quit this mystery and await some fairer fortune."

"What fairer fortune can I wish for?" said the Outlaw. "Do I not now gaze upon thee, and behold thine eyes beam upon me with love? Do I not hear thy voice quivering with tenderness? Do I

not follow in thy footsteps by day, and dream sweet visions of thee by night? By Heaven, Dorothy! fortune hath not a fairer lot in her urn than mine."

"Ah! thy bold spirit I know doth mock at danger," said Dorothy, dejectedly. "But thou knowest not the rigour of my father. When I think of the perils that surround thee, my soul shrinks with terror lest thou shouldst fall a prey to our temerity. Thou art surrounded by men that would sell thy blood for gold, or for favour, if the Vernon required it; and the very thought that thou hadst dared to brave his vengeance would rob my father of all mercy towards thee. Fly then, my soul; I shall be more content if thou art in safety, though I see thee not."

She could not proceed, but endeavoured to stifle her emotion, which produced a sob from her bosom that was audible to her father and his companion.

"I will not believe thou art weary of me," replied her lover. "Thou art an angel in truth and purity. But I cannot live without looking on thee; I draw in my life from thine eyes; I should

perish, miserably, away from thee. Do not urge me to quit thee, then; for sooner shall the sun desert the heavens. Thou dost talk of dangers, but it is thy love, thy tenderness, that do conjure up affrightful images to scare thy mind withal. I am armed against all dangers whilst thou art kind, and whilst Heaven doth preserve thee in health. What other peril can I dread? Thy father is noble, and though he might frown upon our union, he would not do me wrong."

"He knows thee not," replied the damsel; "to him thou art nought but the wild Outlaw,—without birth, without a name. Nor dost thou know the worst. Since I last enjoyed thy company, — I dread to tell thee, — my father hath bid me receive another as my destined husband."

"Another!" exclaimed the Outlaw, in a tone which bespoke a severe excitement of his feelings; "what other? Sure it is not that fierce soldier, Stanley?"

"The same, the same," replied his mistress. "Ah! I see thou dost know him: — he is fierce indeed; but not more

fierce than he is cunning and designing; bold and daring is he, but not more so than he is hypocritical and depraved. Whatever is false in honour hath its centre in him. I pray thee, love, beware of him, if thou dost love my peace."

"Be at rest, sweet Dorothy," returned her lover; "Suffer not the image of this evil genius to disturb thee. If Sir George be warm and peremptory, he is yet a father, and will not force thine inclination. But why wilt thou not set me at rest, and danger at defiance, by giving thyself up to my entreaty? Thou hast but to leap into my arms, and all doubts, and fears, and apprehensions are over. Believe me, love, it must come to this at last."

"Hush, my beloved!" replied Dorothy, in a calm tone; "do my ears no violence. Let other lovers place their felicity in the gratification of sense, but let our enjoyments be pure, unalloyed by mixing with baser passions. That I love thee beyond all that I can express, beyond all that hath a signification in language, I do not blush to confess, for thou art worthy, oh! most

worthy to be beloved. But though thou art thus knit unto my soul and I breathe not a jot of life which does not include some portion of thee; though to live without seeing thee daily, and to forbear our sweet communion, would nigh go to weary me of life; yet I durst not, I could not, I will not so stain my honour, — the honour of a noble house, as to quit the mansion of my fathers clandestinely. No, dear love, I should fear to encounter the armed shades of my stern ancestors, and that they would repel with scorn the flight of their unworthy descendant. Time covereth the shorn lamb. Time healeth the anguish of the heart. We must have patience."

"Time, sweet Dorothy, is a cheat, a very dissembler," replied the Outlaw; "for he doth ever hold out better things, which when they appear are as hollow and delusive as those that are gone by. The storm is now up, but to-morrow doth promise sunshine; and yet when the day is come, the rain falls and the lightning flashes as it did yesterday. Woe to the wretch that places depend-

ance on that hoary deceiver. He is good for nought but for oblivion; he doth corrode the very chains of the heart; he doth estrange the very feelings of love; he draws a veil over the charms of love for the present, and when he throws it aside again, discovers nought but the wrinkled and withered features of age and decay."

"Ah, love!" exclaimed Dorothy, "thou dost speak the language of passion, not of judgment. Thy heart is in a flame, — it is scorched with its own fire. The ardour of youth is not yet subdued in thee by the mature discretion of manhood; or if thou hast laid aside thy juvenile impetuosity, it is superseded by a fierce resolution, which I would have thee temper with sobriety. Of thy nature, as no one knows thee better than I do, no one can so well estimate the nobleness as I can. But, I pray thee, allay the storminess of thy disposition, and let thy reason, which should be the helm of every Christian mind, govern thy mental bark."

"Thou art a sweet lecturer," cried

her lover; "but as well mightst thou preach against gluttony to a wight that is famished, as against ardour of spirit to a man placed as I am. The romance of life which I am engaged in, the wild aspect of this lovely country, the bold nature of the men I herd with, all urge me into an unusual excitement of soul which I cannot overcome."

"Why dost thou, then, continue this savage mode of existence?" said Dorothy. "Return, my beloved, to society; resume thine own gentle nature, and await the disposition of Providence upon our fate."

"Believe not that I will quit these woods without thee," cried the Outlaw; "I would sooner turn outlaw in reality, and live upon the produce of my bow,—become a second Robin Hood in these haunts, where he and his merry men played many a bold freak, than quit thee for a day: and think not, sweet Dorothy, that there is less virtue or pleasure in the state I now live, than in that which is my right. Surely this gorgeous scene we are now enjoying surpasses the most

gaudy one of the court. What are the sparkle of diamonds, the waving of plumes, the glitter of lace and embroidery, all the little bustle displayed in the pageant of sovereignty, to the universal light, the awful repose, the unequalled majesty of this heavenly picture. The queen is the life of the one,—the glorious Creator breathes throughout the other ; and as much as the mighty God surpasses mortality, doth the scene of his framing excel the work of man."

"Thou art in the right, my beloved," said Dorothy, "to regard this scene as unrivalled by human splendour ; and how much is it to be mourned that such heavenly harmony as it displays hath not many admirers of thy character! The most depraved, I cannot but believe, feel some touch of delight, some gratitude to heaven, at the sight of its wonders ; but, believe me, these sylvan shades are not, at this day, the resort of the spirits of Arcadia ; they are haunted by a race of men whose breasts are the habitation of every fierce passion and wild desire : strife is their daily business ; they are the cham-

pions of contention; and bloody revenge for slight provocation doth characterise every mountaineer throughout this upland district."

"Yet have I found them as faithful and as generous as they are stalwart and valiant," said the Outlaw; "it is true, they are neither civil of speech, nor slow in anger; but they are trusty both in word and deed; and I would much sooner confide my life to the hands of a race of this character, than to the cringing and frowning slaves of our great cities, who would sell ye for a marvedi. Have then no fears for me, love,—my life is as safe as if thou thyself hadst the care of it; and here daily will I make the merry green wood ring to my hounds and horn, and at night will I watch the bower of my beloved, till our fate becomes kind, and joins us never to sunder."

"Ah! thou wilt be faint for lack of rest: already," said Dorothy, "if I could part with thee, I would say, hie to thy retreat; but whilst I look upon thee, my soul will not unclasp herself from thine image."

"And if I were to gaze upon thee," replied the Outlaw, "for a hundred years, my senses would need no repose. Love is to me sufficient of repose; it is a balmy rest which none but true lovers can enjoy. True lovers are fed and nursed upon looks and smiles; the accidental pressure of hands shall suffice them for a fortnight's existence;—a pure kiss, or a chaste caress, shall inspire them with animation for a twelvemonth. Oh! that this envious distance were not between us, that I could but reach thy hand,—my banquet would be worthy of a sovereign."

"Thou art growing wild," returned his mistress; "and yet if I were near thee—but let us silence these tumultuous passions, they do but increase our regrets, they cannot assist our union. Oh! that thou couldst appear publicly, and claim me for thine own bride; but Heaven hath forbid it; yet if thou couldst, my beloved, I should nigh kill thee with kindness, my big heart would go near to suffocate thee in its caresses. Go, get thee hence; I am as mad as thou art."

"Nay, be not angry with thy love," said the Outlaw.

"I am not,—not with thee, my life," answered the maiden; "or if I was, pardon me, I repent me heartily; bad were I indeed to be angry with that I love, and that too which most deserves to be beloved. But I fear I shall grow too fond of thee: go, do leave me, I pray thee; if thou stayest, I know not what these ecstasies may force me to."

"Would they might force thee into my arms," replied her lover.

"What! dost thou too conspire with my evil passions?" said Dorothy; "thou, that shouldst support me against mine own heart."

"Ill should I repay the kindness of that sweet ally," returned her lover, "if I were to take part against her. But do thou confide in that gentle monitor, thou wilt have no cause for regret."

"My heart, I fear, is like a treacherous governor," said Dorothy; "it would betray the citadel to the enemy, and say it had done good service to its sovereign."

"But I am not thine enemy, Dorothy," replied the Outlaw.

"No, sure, I meant not that," cried the damsel; "pardon me, I say I know not what. I am a foe to dishonour, and I would not in becoming thy wife, bring the slightest tarnish on thine unsullied reputation; therefore I will teach my heart to become cold,—cold even to thee, until I may with propriety receive thy love."

"Thou hast sure but little love, if thou canst teach thy heart a lesson so unfeeling!" said the Outlaw. "Propriety! In the name of Heaven, what mean you by the word? not, sure, until we receive your father's blessing; for he will bestow ten thousand curses upon any man of my race, sooner than profit one with a good word."

"Alas, it is too true," replied Dorothy.

"And then our principles of faith," said her lover, "would be an invincible bar in the way of his consent. Would the Vernon, the proud supporter of his forefather's ritual, and the more obstinate because that ritual is in misfortune, match

his daughter with one he would deem a heretic?"

"Never!" ejaculated the furious Knight, in a loud voice which might be heard some distance in the park.

Both Dorothy and the outlaw, at that dreadful negative, stood like two statues petrified with fear and astonishment. The heart of Dorothy was wrung with the wildest anguish; at first she appeared to think that the sound was supernatural, that the veto they had heard so distinctly was delivered by some of her dead forefathers, the guardian genius of the house; but as her recollection returned, the tones of her father's voice were too easily distinguishable not to be immediately recognised, and she concluded at once that their whole interview had been overheard. Desirous alone of saving her lover, who, she did not doubt would be sacrificed to her father's vengeance, in case he should fall into his hands, she cried, "Fly, fly, dally not thy time, love, but away into the wood; we are betrayed,— discovered,— our fate

is sealed ; — away love, farewell, — it breaks my heart to say it,— farewell, fly."

" I will not fly without thee," replied the Outlaw ; " leap down into my arms. Come, sweet Dorothy, there is no time now for maidenly fears, leap down, and let us fly together ; by my soul, they shall hack me to pieces before I will quit this spot without thee."

" Nay, but for the love of Heaven, for my sake," cried the anguished maiden, " fly alone, — I should but encumber thee, and we should both be lost : I will not go ; but do thou preserve thy life for my sake. I conjure thee, if thou hast any love for me, to fly : — they are upon thee, love, — away, away."

" I will not budge a foot," said the Outlaw, firmly ; and, drawing his sword, " let that smooth traitor, Stanley, come forth, ; he has thrice dared me to combat, — now let him take his ground."

" Nay, then, farewell, father !" cried Dorothy, placing one foot on the ledge of the window ; " open thine arms, love, I will fly with thee as I may. Adieu !

fair Haddon, I am lost to thee for ever."

She was on the point of throwing herself from the window, and her lover had stretched out his arms to receive her, when she was arrested in her design by some person who caught her by the clothes. She turned round with a piercing shriek, and fell backwards into the arms of her father.

"Oh, Vernon! false Vernon!" cried the Outlaw, who beheld what passed, "thou tyrant, give me my love; — nay, be sure I will have vengeance and justice."

"Thou shalt have half a foot of shining steel," cried Stanley, leaping down from the window with a naked rapier in his hand. "Thou didst call for Stanley; here he is, what want ye with him?"

"I want thy life, villain!" cried the Outlaw, rushing upon him. "Thy life, dog."

But it happened unfortunately for the lover of the fair Dorothy, that he had not only to do with a consummate swords-

man, and a man whose cool courage and insensible valour were unequalled; but that he had, in his rage, lost all command of himself. In his first assault upon the wary soldier, therefore, he received a severe flesh wound, which did not, nevertheless, abate his fury; but he pressed on, and exhausted himself against the malignant skill of his adversary, who reserved himself for his turn in the assault, when the strength of his foe should be expended. And it was not long before he took the offensive with a rancorous determination which could only have possessed the mind of such a fiend, and using all advantages, soon threw his weakened rival back upon the sward, and, aiming his point at his throat, would have despatched him, had not his arm been clutched upon by a fierce grasp. His ears were at the same moment assailed with an eldritch scream, and he beheld before him the hideous head of Dame Ollerenshaw, rendered more yellow by the sickly glare of the moon.

The Soldier, whose eye-balls glared first upon his foe, and then upon the woman, with the direful scowl of an angry demon, at last broke silence, and cried, in a voice as unearthly as that of the woodman's wife herself: "D——d witch! what brings thee here to let my revenge? Go hellward if thou likest, but at thy peril stand back."

"I will not stand back, thou accursed fiend! cried she, in a voice between a growl and a scream. "Draw my blood, and be it upon thee, but thou shalt not lay hand upon this noble youth. Stand back then!"

"Devil's dam!" cried Stanley, raising his sword so as to strike at her, instead of making a thrust, "thou art got i' the *mêlée*. — Take thy fortune."

He made a fierce cut at the head of the woman, but she received the blow on a large green branch of a tree, which until now she had concealed behind her, and the Outlaw, having recovered his breath, sprang upon his feet, and snatching the clumsy weapon out of her hand,

took his foe by surprise, and at a blow laid him senseless upon the earth. He had scarcely performed this feat, before Dame Ollerenshaw, seizing him by the arm, hurried him away into the wood.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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